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## THE HEARTHSTONE AND THE LOOM

*By Padraic Colum*

MAURICE

And we are here to look into a house  
Where there's not even a forgotten stool,  
You at the doorway, I where the window was :  
I see the broken hearthstone.

TERENCE

And I see  
A patch of sunlight on the crumbled wall.  
A loom was there ; it was a young girl's own.

MAURICE

And all around us are the places named  
In legend while the pot boiled on the hearth—  
Urney and Kevitt and cool Lismore,  
Famous for bluebells, nut-dells, an old rath,  
Or ditches where the whins had brighter gold.

TERENCE

The clatter of the house gone with the smoke  
Of peats new laid around the morning fire,  
And burning rightly, brightly, quietly—  
A beat, a measure of accord between  
Her mind and loom, the shuttle and her hand,  
Clack of the loom was all the outer sound.  
It was a yard-long loom and made for her  
By an old uncle, a thoughtful man  
Who kept in trim a dozen beds of flowers  
Behind a fuschia hedge. My thread is weak

To cross to who he was and where he was,  
 But she sat there, young mistress of the loom,  
 And wove the grey or brown and therewith dreamed  
 More glowing patterns in the days to be.

MAURICE

A change as great as any were foretold  
 In Columbkil's quaint prophecies is here—  
 Carriages without horses, and the hound  
 The calf displacing in the favoured nook.  
 A broken quern-stone once held the gate :  
 A man from the Museum was searching for it,  
 But where it 's gone there 's nobody can tell.

TERENCE

This was the time when she was most herself :  
 She'd run to neighbours' houses, offer them  
 The things she wove, and brighter things than webs,  
 Things that she made with feathers and with flowers.  
 Like the wren's bevy ravelled from the nest,  
 Where no one knows they're gone.

MAURICE

But like the sun upon a patch of sail  
 Of vessel long delayed, the prophecy  
 Fulfilled, of the old stock restored  
 And names contemned now honored to the full.

TERENCE

Now that her grand-daughter has come to wed  
 (She has the bright hair and the pointed face  
 That made the older kindred so remarked  
 By those who kept in mind the lineages)  
 She is bethought on. The time is when  
 The blackthorn's faint bloom is on the hedge.

MAURICE

What would you have fulfilled  
 For those who come into the after-story ?

## TERENCE

Bread eaten without debts,  
 Space in a house, no cark to waken to,  
 And no word said that brings an inner moan  
 And not a faithful answer ; over these,  
 Work of the day that brings enough to keep  
 Brave an innocence in its walks and ways,  
 And festivals from time to time that mean  
 A share in revelry or in devotion,  
 And friends to take one out of the four walls  
 To some enjoyment that is like a ransom.

## MAURICE

And so we turn from window sill and door  
 Now that we only speak in prophecies.

*Two Poems By Raymond Garlick*

## AN INVITATION TO FRIENDS

Set here in my house on a shelf seven miles  
 from the stack of Snowdon (myself come back  
 to the mountains, the stark merry mills

of my manhood), I weave this warp of words  
 to wind you north. Set forth to the trumpets  
 of the sea and the banners of the woods

of the west and come : let the sky's dark runes,  
 be your compass and the winds your map  
 to this cloud-lapped valley and hill of rains.

We will hoist up the mist and re-hang  
 all the waterfalls for you, air each peak  
 and teach the echoes of the rocks to ring

the changes of the weather. Ticklish trout  
 simper in limpid streams and salmon leap  
 in stout abandon to their loves' retreat :

put everything aside except the sun  
 and turn your steps towards the stairs of Wales.  
 We watch to bid you welcome now or soon.

## THE DINOSAURS

Tonight I climbed in the rafters of Wales  
 and watched, unseen, the browsing mountains lie  
 like dinosaurs above the sheepfold walls

sunning their high crests in the day's last light.  
 With bated breath I stalked them at their rest,  
 grazing in flocks among the purple loot

of ancient slate mines, waterlogged and bleak.  
 Four lakes lay far below my feet, like pools  
 left by receding ice milleniums back,

the fossil craters of a world immersed.  
 But as I watched the dinosaurs gave way  
 before the mightier monsters of the mist.



## RETURN TO FIDDOWN

*By Maurice Farley*

A sweep of the oars, a turn of the river would show  
 The fields in familiar patterns,  
 How did the litany go ?  
 Jacques and Fewer and Keating,  
 Medlicott, Morris and Bowe,  
 Names with a foreign cadence,  
 And I thought they would lightly flow  
 Into a rhyming sequence  
 With the roads that twist and twine  
 By Clonmore and Cloncunny  
 To Emil and Graiguevine,  
 And Brownswood over the water,  
 Fragrant with fir and pine.

The oars trailed in the water,  
 Letting the light cot glide,  
 Under the tollbridge shadows,  
 Feeling the swell of the tide,  
 While, passing over the shallows  
 Harshly the wild geese cried,  
 And over the drowned daisies  
 The swans in their crested pride  
 Swam by the drooping sallies  
 And the low roofs of Fiddown  
 By Ardclone and Tinhalla  
 On into Carrick town  
 By green bank and deep water  
 Where Ormonde's keep looks down.

The blue-veiled ring of the mountains  
 Fringing the farmlands stood,  
 A dark cloak flung on their shoulders,  
 The shadows of Dowling wood ;  
 And I thought, there's peace at Owing,

And silence at Tinnaslee,  
 Under Tybroughney Castle  
 The barge lies moored at the quay,  
 In all this tranquil valley  
 Time hurries for none but me ;  
 There is a ring of enchantment  
 From Bannswood to Corlahon,  
 And Suir in his calm depths mirrors  
 The summer on Slievenamon.

## FLESK RIVER

BY FR. JEROME KIELY

Here is the place for remembering the Saviour :  
 There are black boulders in the river, blocks of stumbling ;  
 the cruel arms of the hills are raised to smite it ;  
 but its passion is spent in the Poulgorm chalice  
 and near Garries the Easter-sun dives for a body-tumbling,  
 then it runs at last where Loch Lein will calm and light it.

And here is the place for remembering O'Rahilly :  
 Black boulders of sorrow on his heart he came here trudging  
 barefoot, though his race were poets in Munster before  
 Christ's bearing,  
 soul weary of Duibhneacha and the eating of periwinkles ;  
 came to Killaha and to O'Donoghue the Ungrudging  
 and he went lightened by some joy, shoes without wrinkle  
 wearing.

## CHÚ CHULLAIN OF MUIRTHEMNE

BY RÓISIN Ó MARA

Slain he lay. This time they understood  
 The curse upon their spears, thrust to the core  
 Of that great burning eagle that would soar no more.  
 The hills of Ulster shuddered in his blood.

The hosts of Maeve fled to the sun-filled west,  
 Fled from the Liath Machas' mad display,  
 As thrice the steed raced foaming round and then away,  
 Plunging into the Great Unseen with fiery zest.

Erin, thy golden harp is ripped in two,  
 And since, each day, the rains lamenting come,  
 Piling years on to years, and driving men from home,  
 Keening the great Chú Chullain that they slew.

Upright he died. He loosened brooch and cord  
 In a great surge of majesty, and bathed in blood  
 Reeled up to where one high stone pillar stood.  
 He bound himself to it, and drew his sword.

When on the billowed plains that piteous crew  
 Turned with dread hearts to view their hill of shame  
 They saw him standing, and his brilliant sword aflame  
 In the red sunset. And they fled anew

Knowing him now divine. O harp of gold !  
 The sun sank, and a whispering night wind rose,  
 The great death-dreams descending found him as he chose.  
 The stars throbbed in the sky. A millionfold.



# CHILDHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH OF Æ

By Monk Gibbon

(Continued)

*While I was yet a boy I began to run in and out of the house of dream, and as I went inward I grew older. An age of the spirit would fall upon me, and then I would come out of the reverie and be the careless boy once more.*

—*Song and Its Fountains.*

LATE in 1878 or early in 1879 the Russell family moved to Dublin. They settled at 33, Emorville Avenue, not Emorville Road as stated in *A Memoir of Æ*, the father having been offered a post with the accountants Craig and Gardiner. We know little or nothing of Æ's education for the next three or four years, for he does not appear in the Roll of Rathmines School, under Dr. Benson, until the year 1882. He was "enrolled in evening classes at the Metropolitan School of Art at 13 years of age in March 1880. He continued as an Evening Student up to May of that year". It is quite possible that Russell went to some small private school at this time. What is significant is that he had already shewn sufficient artistic talent to justify sending him to the evening classes at the Art School. After May 1880 he did not attend again until October 1883, when he resumed Evening Classes about six months before he left Dr. Benson's school. His first venture as an art student therefore seems to have been a rather brief preliminary canter. Why it ended so abruptly we cannot even surmise. It is hardly likely that he was, like Dickens at the same age, contributing to the family exchequer. It is more probably that he was getting ready to complete his education under the most famous Dublin schoolmaster of the time.

The Rev. Charles William Benson, M.A., LL.D., founded Rathmines School in the year 1858 (and not as given in his



memorial tablet, in 1859). Its motto was *Ora et Labora*. Benson had started the school when he was 21 with a partner named Wills whose father was an artist. When the latter enquired one evening "and how many boys have you now?", Wills made the mournful reply "There is but one thin boy between us and ruin". (He was the future Sir Henry Swanzy, the oculist.) Benson made little by his school, was often in financial anxiety—he was the father of twelve children—and had an average of twenty assistant masters always to pay, some of them undergraduates going through T.C.D. The future Lord Glenavy taught for him at one time, as also Bernard, later Archbishop of Dublin, and Crozier, the future Primate, whose brother was on the permanent staff. Benson's verdict on himself was "I do not think I was ever a very good disciplinarian", and he would quote a lady who said of him, "He must have a weak mind because all the boys are so fond of him". But others have borne witness to "his genuine love of his profession, his concern for the moral and spiritual as well as the intellectual development of his pupils, and a quaint strain of whimsical humour which was peculiarly his own, and which was of a kind easily adaptable to the minds of boys". He could refer to that "evil talking and those evil communications so common in schools and which poison the young soul so quickly and soil the robe of imagination so early that never in this world can it be got quite clean again"; and he was delighted when an old pupil, Henry Taylor, could say at a prize distribution "I was Captain of the School for some two years, and never during that time did I hear one impure or impious word from the boys".

The whole school gathered daily in the big schoolroom for prayers at ten o'clock. At the far end was a raised platform with a three-manual organ in the middle, and stalls either side for the Headmaster and the Prefects. On Friday, instead of the usual school prayers (General Confession, Psalm, Hymn, etc.), the Litany, or part of it, was sung, and there was a short school sermon by Dr. Benson. Downstairs beneath the hall was a large kitchen, where at half-time coffee and buns might be purchased for a trifle. Underneath the big schoolroom was a partially open yard where old Murray, the carpenter, carried on his operations.

In the School Roll, George Russell's name appears as No. 1272, twenty-second on the list for the year 1882. The Rev. Samuel Synge, brother of John Millington Synge, the playwright, was

Russell's contemporary, having been born less than a month earlier. He had entered the school in 1878. Macalister, the archæologist, had entered it in 1881.

In *A Memoir of Æ*, John Eglinton writes "Russell's education was presumably of the 'commercial order', for he never shewed any knowledge of Greek or Latin or of any foreign language". But this did not tally with a distinct recollection on my part of an evening at Rathgar Avenue when I had arrived before the other guests and found myself alone with Æ, and when, apropos a discussion, I think, on Pauline mysticism, he had gone to his bookcase, taken out a Greek Testament and read me slowly, and with considerable deliberation, a passage in the original Greek. Surely I could not have dreamt this whole incident? Osborn Bergin had also once mentioned to me having heard Æ quote from Virgil, and on enquiry he confirmed this, writing to me:—"the line was *Conticuere omnes, intentique ora tenebant* from Aen. II. Of course, one line does not prove much. He never pretended to know Irish, yet he once repeated four lines or so of an Irish song, taught him by Rolleston, I think."

Further refutation of Eglinton's surmise is furnished by a bound set of *Blue, White and Blue*, the school magazine of Rathmines School, which has found its way into the National Library of Ireland. Here I was able to discover definite traces of Russell's scholastic career. His name first appears in the number for June 1882. There, in the results of the Easter Exam for Form V Lower, he figures in the 2nd rank as 'Russell, William George' with 235 marks out of a maximum of 450. That he should have gone straight into this form on entering the school shews that his education was already fairly well advanced. In the Intermediate Examination for 1882 he obtains two Ordinary Passes and one Pass with Honours in the Junior Grade. His friend, H. Chester Browne, obtains three Ordinary Passes and seven Passes with Honours.

There is no mention of Russell's name in succeeding numbers until November 1883—and never at any time in connection with athletics—when in the Intermediate Middle Grade he obtains one Ordinary and one Pass with Honours. Dr. Benson protests about this time against the reluctance of parents to enter their sons for many, or even any, subjects in the Exam lest they should fail. Then in March 1884 Russell's name figures as the only member



of Form VI Lower to be in the first rank. There are none at all in the second rank, followed by four in the third. He obtains 2,140 marks out of a total maximum of 3,500.

In addition he gets the following prizes—

Form VI Lower

Classics	...	...	...	George Russell
English	...	...	...	George Russell

Prizes for Marks during the half year—

Form VI Lower : George Russell. Robert Dunlop. G. Braddell.

Mr. Bewley's Writing Prizes—

Form VI Lower : Russell, George W.

There was no other George Russell in the school at any time, so all the entries apply to Æ, though it will be noted that the way in which his name is given varies.

Thanks to the file of this long extinct school magazine it has been possible to form a fairly clear idea of Æ's later schooldays. Though he may not have been exceptional as a scholar, his friends according to the Rev. Chester Browne nicknamed him 'The Genius'. It will be seen from the school records that though Russell may not have distinguished himself in the earlier stages of his school career, or in the Junior Grade of the Intermediate, he ended by being the outstanding member of his form, the Lower Sixth. There he figures alone in the first rank. No one else in the form is placed in the first rank or even in the second. He gets the prize for Classics, for English and for Handwriting, a gift inherited perhaps from his father, whose standard was there to be emulated. The various phases of Æ's calligraphy by the way would be of interest to an expert. The earliest specimen I have seen—in the signature as a schoolboy 'Geo. Russell' on a drawing—is almost commercial copperplate, devoid of any individual character. There follows the phase, of the early notebooks and the letters to Carrie Rea, of a flowing rather untidy hand, spilling itself onto the page in a hurried spate. Finally there is the later handwriting, completely different, the letters smaller, the words much more compact, the tendency being to tighten into a difficult highly individual style, the words and letters sloping slightly to the right and with a tendency in the lines to slant diagonally down the page while covering every inch of space. Between the



earlier writing and the later there is a whole life history and character.

When C. P. Curran and others organised the Memorial Exhibition of Paintings by Æ at Egan's Gallery in Dublin in 1936, there walked into the Gallery one day an elderly retired clergyman who produced a very early sketchbook filled with MS. poems by Æ, a photograph of the young George Russell aged about nineteen with one of his friends, and various other interesting personalia connected with that period. These he lent to the Exhibition for the remainder of its run. I was not in Ireland then and did not see them, but when I returned to Dublin and Curran told me this, I called on the Rev. Chester Browne at his rooms in Hatch Street and was shewn the various souvenirs. Their subsequent history is rather tragic. Browne lent me the sketchbook for a few days, and my recollection is that it was filled with a number of earnest, rather Wordsworthian verses, of which John Eglinton in the *Memoir* quotes a characteristic example. When I returned the sketchbook I impressed upon its owner that it was of considerable associative if not actually literary interest; and told him that The National Library might be glad one day to take charge of it. He replied that that would be a step for those who came after him to take. Curran tells me that on the rare occasions when he met Browne at the Royal Dublin Society lectures he also used to remind the old gentleman that his mementoes were well worth preserving. But it would have been better for one or other of us to have held a pistol to his head and cried 'Stand and deliver!'. I suspect that with a little tact the items might have been ours or the Library's. As it was they were fated to disappear. Their owner died leaving his personal possessions at Hatch Street to Miss Montserrat in whose house he had rooms, and the rest of his property to a nephew. Miss Montserrat's sister was very ill at the time and she was busy nursing her, and the nephew appears to have gone through the effects burning any papers that did not seem to him of interest. He could find nothing for me amongst what was left, and when I asked him whether he had burnt any notebooks, replied "several". "With verses in them?" "I think so." I had been out of Ireland at the time of Mr. Browne's death and had not heard of it. More than a year later Miss Montserrat, after a search, found me, stuck in a school atlas, one large comic drawing in pen-and-

ink, tinted in colour, of a fat, top-hatted gentleman who has just missed his train and who is examining his watch while perspiration pours from his brow. It is cleverly done on a large sheet of drawing paper with a faintly pencilled 'Latin' still on it, and signed in ink with a flourish—'Geo. Russell'. The man is a typical North of Ireland well-to-do pillar of society, out of whose quandary the artist has got the full measure of fun. Miss Montserrat very kindly offered me the drawing, but I suggested instead that she should present it through me to the Armagh Museum, whose curator, Mr. T. G. F. Paterson, is making a collection and hopes one day to have an Æ room in the museum. So there the sketch rests now. But the book of poems is lost and various other sketches which Browne shewed me and the photograph which was the earliest one of Russell in my cognizance. People who have souvenirs of any great man should label them clearly. For without such a reminder to stay their hand, the tidy and unsentimental are the declared enemies of the past, and the dustbin or firegrate waits as an ever open Gehenna for what might bring tears of joy to a collector's eye.

Taught by this experience, when Henry Goodwillie died I tried to get in touch with his son to warn him that besides the three early water-colours by Russell which hung in the house—one of the view from his home in Grosvenor Square, another of St. Patrick's Close, a spot which figures also in one of his poems—misty, sombre sketches, with a good deal of work in Indian ink, his father might have kept some mementoes of his schooldays, and to be on the lookout for these when sorting his papers. It was some months before the sone came to Dublin, but I saw him then and made the suggestion to him. He made a search but could, however, report nothing, and it was a piece of luck that I was staying with my mother in Dublin when he rang up nearly a year later to say that he had just come across the sort of thing I had been asking about. This collection of very early work is now in my possession.

Browne and Goodwillie were Russell's two greatest friends at school. Goodwillie was a distinguished athlete, which shews that even then Russell was capable of inspiring affection in persons whose tastes differed widely from his own. From what Mr. Browne told me once in conversation, I received the impression of a spirit of gaiety and good-natured raillery between the friends, reflecting

something of the Headmaster's own 'streak of whimsical humour'. The trio might almost have been an Irish variant of *Stalky and Co.*, without the fanatical opposition to seniors and 'beaks'. In *A Memoir of Æ* is printed part of a letter from the Rev. Henry Chester Browne, in which he says of Russell 'In school he was quickly recognised as having literary and artistic instincts of an order not usually found amongst boys, and he had to put up with a little playful ragging, from me as well as from others, in consequence. A lampoon of mine, done of him in 1883, describes him as "the special artist and literary critic of Rathmines College". We both left school about the same time in 1884 but remained the closest friends until I left Dublin in 1891. He and I, and another chum, Henry Goodwillie, took many long walks into the country together, and I was with him more than once when he was doing some of his earliest painting on the banks of the Dodder. The sketch-book which he always carried with him, as well as a MS. book of his poems which he gave me, are still in my possession'.

Browne shewed me a little comic painting in water-colour of Russell, depicted as a long-legged seventeen-year-old, colliding with a man pushing a wheelbarrow, while he gazes in complete abstraction into the window of an art shop where there is a plaster cast of 'The Dancing Faun'. Russell's own sketches which his friend had kept were in the same strain.

The school magazine throws a number of sidelights on Russell's life at this time. For many years there was an annual Holyhead Excursion in the summer for the whole school. The boys crossed by the morning Mail Boat—playing cricket with a paper ball on deck—and returned by the evening boat to North Wall. This gave them four or five hours in Holyhead, to visit the South Stack lighthouse on its island rock, inspect Lloyd's signal-station, looking through the telescopes of various sizes, by which the signal-master said he could recognize a ship thirty miles away, and watch the gulls, razorbills and guillemots on the ledges of the cliffs. A prize used to be offered by the Captain of the Mail Boat to the boy who first sighted land—'a bottle of champagne' on one occasion, commuted for one of ginger-beer when Dr. Benson explained that they were 'teetotal'.

As I have said, I was lucky enough to trace and secure a number of drawings done by Russell, most of them while at school, and given by him to his friend Henry Goodwillie. Amongst these



is a large folded sheet, thirty inches by twenty-two, entitled "Holyhead Excursion. 1884. Sketches by G. W. Russell". It contains no less than sixteen separate, rather clever sketches in Indian ink, of people and episodes in connection with the summer picnic, with a looped running scroll separating each sketch from the next. Most of the drawings have a touch of humour or even of good-natured satire about them. "The captain and a friend feebly perambulate the deck" does not depict the Captain of the ship, but two senior boys wearing bowler hats, one of them with a Jewish nose, the other with glasses and a short-sighted expression, tottering along the deck arm in arm. A neighbouring sketch is entitled "A bad case. Le' M' alone." and depicts a victim in the last throes of mal-de-mer. "In a dark corner underneath" shews a youth surreptitiously smoking a cigarette. There are sketches of a boy bowling underarm to another on deck; a stoker busy at his furnace; an angry bearded sailor with a fisherman's cap, exclaiming "I'll fight or dance any man of ye for a sovryn", and another leaning over the railing of the Captain's deck and belabouring a pair of legs protruding from a porthole below with an angry "Keep in! will yer". There are portraits of various youths, the "One who stayed at home afraid of being sick"—feet up on a table, hands stretched above his head to accompany a cavernous yawn; "He thought he would be late"—spectacles, bowler and packet of sandwiches falling in the road behind him as he hurries to the rendezvous. There is even—illuminating side comment on school picnics—the boy stretched flat on his stomach in the grass hiding, with the caption 'Voice. "Bring all your lunches here". Boy with oranges "Catch me"'. The voice doubtless was Dr. Benson's, who must have believed in the pooling of resources on these occasions.

These drawings reveal just the temperamental bias which I would have expected from what Browne told me in conversation. Russell is still the happy schoolboy getting the maximum fun out of life. A similar but smaller sheet is entitled "Intermediate Examination. Sketches by G. W. Russell". It contains seven sketches, each with a circular surround and the initials G. R. There is a triumphant youth with a bowler hat shewing another, who wears a sort of Boys' Brigade or volunteer's cap with ribbons at the back, the exam paper and exclaiming "Sorry for you but you answered those four questions wrong". There is the youth

diving through the doorway, stick in hand, at the last minute, past a Notice "The doors will close at 15 minutes past ten"; there is the puzzled candidate "He looked first at his paper and then began to study the ceiling", and the Irate Examiner, tearing his hair out in handfuls and exclaiming "If I caught the young lunatic who wrote this, I'd—I'd—". In fact we are given all the ardours and endurances of the occasion.

These two groups of sketches are done quickly with the pen, and with a lot of cross-hatching. A third group "Summer Anticipations. G. Russell" contains seven drawings representing various holiday enjoyments, a youth bathing, sketching at an easel, rock-climbing in a little paper hat like the Carpenter's in Alice in Wonderland, batting at cricket, playing tennis with a friend, pulling a two-oared skiff, and reading a book lazily by the river's edge. These may be Russell's own anticipations for the holidays or they may have been made on behalf of his friend Goodwillie. They suggest 'all the long ardour of a summer day' at a period when youth had few worries and plenty of fun. Another drawing, in Indian ink, on coarse art paper and with very heavy cross-hatching, I suspect of being the earliest of them all. It is signed "G. Russell delineavit", and below are inscribed Longfellow's four lines—

At day-break on the bleak sea-wrack  
A fisherman stood aghast,  
To see the form of a maiden fair  
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

It depicts a wildly turbulent sea and a thunderous black horizon, while a fisherman in long boots and sou'wester, hands raised to brow, looks out to where a maiden, deathly white, floats alongside a huge broken mast.

All these sketches are emphatically juvenilia, such as any fairly talented schoolboy with a flair for sketching could achieve. More artistic interest attaches to the remaining ones, three of which I shall not discuss here as they seem definitely to belong to a later period. The fourth, however, belongs to this time and is initialled "G.R. '84". It is the pencilled sketch of a youth's head, inked over, and with some cross-hatching added, to emphasise the profile. It is done on copybook lined paper, and is a clever and striking piece of work. This drawing presents a distinct problem.

It is almost certainly of either Russell himself or of his friend Goodwillie who kept it all his life. The piece of paper  $5\frac{7}{8}$ " by  $4\frac{1}{4}$ " has been cut out and carefully mounted on a piece of white card and given a plain ruled pencilled surround. Below the youth's head and the signature and date are two other pencilled heads, not inked in, one full face and one profile, of an elderly bearded man who bears a distinct resemblance to Æ himself in old age. The nose in the profile version is similar to the nose of the young man. I think I am justified in advancing the theory that the inked-over sketch is a self-portrait of Æ at the age of seventeen. The profile bears a certain resemblance to Hughes's early plaster head of Russell in the Municipal Gallery. The sketch must have been originally done in pencil in an exercise book, and then, when his friend took a fancy to it, lightly inked over and sharpened. But what of the two pencil drawings below? Are they prophetic intimations of what the same young man would look like in old age? If so Russell, as a boy, was certainly clairvoyant! There is a more likely explanation. It is clear from its position that the signature 'G.R. '84' applies only to the top drawing in the centre of the page. If all three drawings had been signed at the same time, it would have appeared much lower. My theory is this. Goodwillie kept the exercise book and shewed it to Russell one day later in life. The latter then added the two lightning pencil impressions of himself as an old man, in contrast to the youth he had once been; and only then did Goodwillie cut the page out and mount it on an edged card as it is now. The sketch of course could be of Goodwillie himself, but his son did not think so, and there would then be no reason for the added bearded figures.

George Russell left Rathmines School in 1884 and his life for the next six years, until he entered Pim's in August 1890, is somewhat of a mystery. I hope to discuss this mystery in an article at some future date.



# THE GOLDEN BREW

By Thomas Kelly

## CHARACTERS :

NANCY LAVELLE	.	.	.	<i>A widowed shebeen-keeper.</i>
BRIDGET CUDDIGAN	.	.	.	<i>Her niece.</i>
MANUS MACKY MULCHRONE	.	.	.	<i>An adventurer.</i>
FESTUS MACKY MULCHRONE	.	.	.	<i>His nephew.</i>
ELLEN O'COUNAHAN	.	.	.	<i>A soothsayer.</i>

## SETTING :

*The living room of a shebeen in an isolated corner of the West of Ireland*

## PERIOD :

*The early 1950's*

*The livingroom of a shebeen in an out-of-the-way place in the West of Ireland. There are doors back, left and right. Window at back, to left of door. Fireplace down right, with chair in front of it. In centre a table, with a chair on each side of it. Dresser or cupboard, with drawer in which are hidden a large black bottle and a small one, both containing water. Near door back is a battered looking fibre suitcase, on which rest a blackthorn stick and an old brown hat.*

*(Nancy Lavelle, a woman about 50, is clearing the table after a meal, putting cups etc. on the dresser. Manus Macky Mulchrone, a shabbily-dressed man about 55, is sitting on chair in front of the fireplace).*

NANCY : *(continuing their chat)* : And is it a widow-man you are, mister, with no womankind spancellor to you at all ?

MANUS : A widow-man surely, since two years the far side of the the year was in it last.

NANCY : Now, supposing I was to wed yourself, what quality name would I be then bearing ?

MANUS : A historic name I'm telling you, over the sanctified centuries before Cromwell told the jovial Joyces to rejoice in hell or Connemara. Manus Macky Mulchrone is my label.

NANCY : Sure that's only a flourish of a name, the likes you'd see on a blistered signboard in a windy, Western town.

MANUS : Blistered you're saying ? Gilded letters would be there, claiming licence to retail red wine and black porter, amber whiskey and plug tobacco.

NANCY : There's good spirits can be sold without licence.

MANUS : Not making bold, woman of the house, but what class of a Christian title is borne by yourself ?

NANCY : A regal name surely, and I a lateral descendant of the last queen of Cloonaquin.

MANUS : Myself, I claim descent from the Mulqueens of Corofin, but 'twould be a princely privilege to submerge a patronymic as classy as your own.

NANCY : One thing only would make me loath to emerge from Nancy Lavelle into Nancy Mulchrone. I wouldn't like to be rhymed with—ochone.

MANUS : But your first term'd still be Nancy, and that's a poet's name surely. (*Sings*) : My lovely Nancy, my only fancy.

NANCY : I'm thinking 'tis the deludering tongue you have, Manus Macky. Now, if the two of us was made one, which of us'd be the one ?

MANUS : Yourself surely. Queen of my future, queen of my fortune.

NANCY : And is there no family followers to come stalking yourself at the down of dusk ?

MANUS : I have the charge of one nephew only, God help me. A poor eejut of an omadhaun would make you wonder why his likes was grafted onto my family tree.

NANCY : And is it such a nincompoop would be under *our* roof-tree, if so be I'd be after wedding yourself ?

MANUS : It is not surely. In two days, or three days maybe, I'll smuggle him north from Sligo, in the Glasgow liner.

NANCY : Will the poor numbskull be able to defend himself before the kilted men ?

MANUS (*with a laugh*) : When they behold his ugly visage they'll conscript him for a wild west menagerie, or into a circus cage labelled : " The only leprechaun in captivity."

NANCY : He must be the world's wonder of a beauty-boy. Where did you say that famous farm of yours was ?

MANUS (*evasively*) : A great way to the south, turning east behind the four heathered hills of Knock-na-hooligan.

NANCY : Maybe 'twas only a stripe of donny, dirty land you owned ?

MANUS : Whist, woman. Wide acres of loamy grazing, would

fatten scores of scrawny bullocks till the lumps of beef was dug from them, like slobs of turf from the deeps of a bog.

NANCY : 'Twas a queer, and a foolish thing, I'm saying, to go selling that jewel of a pasture holding.

MANUS : I'm a man of sociability. There was always a great carry of gloom lining the clouds over the townland.

NANCY : And had you no neighbours to ramble to, when the risen moon was riding in the vault of heaven ?

MANUS : No one near or passing, but maybe a poor fellow chewing straws, talking to himself with his wits scattered. Or the rushing ambulance screeching north, bearing the bruised carcass of a foolish man came second in a fair-day argument, to the operating hospital of Castlebar.

NANCY : Maybe 'twas only a rack-rent of a price you auctioned for ?

MANUS : A tidy sum, I'm telling you. Five hundred sterling notes, with bidders and bailiffs, lawyers and land commissioners all placated.

NANCY : A gorgeous fortune you have surely. No offence, mister, but you should be cautious. Where is the money now ?

MANUS : On its way to the steely vaults of the marble bank is a child's creep from the market cross of Sligo.

NANCY : Isn't it a chancey thing, with the thugs and the thimblemen do be travelling, to convey such a noble sum in your roomy pockets ?

MANUS (*amused*) : Is it for a half-baked simpleton you take me ? The laddo himself has it.

NANCY (*startled*) : Is it your louty nephew, and he with a screw loose ?

MANUS : It's a small screw only, and it not so very loose. But *he* knows nothing of the cash and carry.

NANCY : How could he have that fine sum and he not knowing ?

MANUS : Unbeknownst, I sewed the wad of notes within his back waistcoat lining, to keep his kidneys warm, and itself safe.

NANCY : Whoever buys you for a looney'll strike a wicked bargain. (*With sudden concern*). Where is the boy now ?

MANUS : Following after. Blistered his heel was, speeding him down to the crawl of a freighted ass.

NANCY : (*goes to door back*) : Is it left him behind you're saying ?

MANUS : He sojourned into a cottage, to salve his chilblains. I pointed this house to him from the hill beyond.



NANCY (*looking off back*) : There's not sight nor light of him to the eastern turn of the highway.

MANUS : I told him I'd take my ease under this hospitable roof, until the mist lifted from the heights of Carrownesker.

NANCY (*comes from door*) : The saints protect the poor fellow, with his brains addled, and the dark descending.

MANUS : If I may make so bold, Nancy, is it any domestic incumbrance you have yourself ?

NANCY : Neither chick nor child by my first man. But I have a niece for company, from the down of dusk to the rising dawn, between the vigil of Michaelmas and the octave of Saint Patrick.

MANUS (*suspiciously*) : And will she be . . . ?

NANCY (*interrupting*) : She will not ! (*Bridget Cuddigan, a girl of about 20, peeps in furtively by door right. She is gaudily dressed and badly made-up*). Packing her off to service in a quality house I'll be, the instant minute she's washed-up after our wedding.

MANUS : That'll be the blissful and the boisterous day.

NANCY (*indicates door right which Bridget closes stealthily*) : Sprawled on the bed within she is now, the divil mend her ! Keening like O'Donnell's dog she was a while back, with a raging toothache from chewing gums.

MANUS : A clean, tidy girl round the house would enable both of us to recline here at our ease ?

NANCY (*the door is held ajar and Bridget peeps in*) : A useless streeler, with cornflour on her nose, and red raddle on her lips, till I often wished I'd left her beyond in merry England.

MANUS : We'll be well rid of her so. A painted Judy'd be only a distraction to simple young fellows in a quiet place like this. (*Bridget shakes her fist towards Manus, then retreats, closing door, without being seen by the others*).

NANCY (*goes to door back and looks off*) : Quiet, did you say ? Wait till the drift of dawn, the August fair of Ardnaclooney. Jobbers and drovers and dealers—clean hardy men, with tight gaiters and tight faces—to come prancing in on the floor, slapping five shillings maybe on the flat of the table, and calling : “ A drop from the black bottle, and no change out of that.”

MANUS : Is it a shebeen you're saying ?

NANCY (*comes from door*) : That's an ugly word, Manus Macky, is against the ruling law, to put on the obliging of decent, drouhty men, with red gullets as parched as the flue of Larry Bawn's limekiln.

MANUS (*with cunning hopefulness*) : Would there be e'er a drop left in the black bottle, this day of ruling thirst ?

NANCY : There might, and there might not. 'Twould be an unmanly thing to go toasting your troth, and your brother's wife's son is making bubbles maybe, through the slimy ooze of a choking ditch.

MANUS : I wouldn't be that lucky to be rid of him. (*Goes to door back and looks off*). He's a middling long while surely. (*Comes from door*).

NANCY : 'Twould be a misery retribution on yourself, and that mint of money to fall into maraudering hands. 'Twill be well, I'm saying, to secure it soon in our joint account.

MANUS : Joint account ? That's a mistrusting class of thing to say. The two of us'd have to traverse the lengthy miles to Sligo, every time we wished to draw in, or draw out ?

NANCY : We could tell the money treasurer to put a tidy cross on the paper, then you'd touch the pen with whatever finger'd be pleasing to his honour. (*Goes to door back*).

MANUS (*flaring-up*) : Is it flinging the disgrace of making his mark at a Mulchrone you'd be, and my progenitors scholars and schoolmasters, since Brian Boru showed the daring Danes their Waterloo ?

NANCY (*comes from door*) : No disgrace, but a compliment I'm saying. Only a clever man can *act* the spalpeen, and he qualified to flourish a pen as fluent as a professor.

MANUS (*impressed*) : It's the deep woman you are surely, Nancy Lavelle, and the two of us should compose a team to outwit the world. Is it a snug class of holding you have here ?

NANCY : Snug is no name for it. Cuttings of turf a spit's length from the road, and the grazing of twenty heifers on the southern slopes. (*Takes large bottle from hiding-place and pours from it into cup*).

MANUS : And how many acres of arable do you possess ?

NANCY (*hands him cup*) : Whist now with your arable. Take a small sup of this malt poteen, then you'll search for your nephew is maybe gurgling in the brown dregs of a dirty drain.

MANUS (*holds up cup*) : Great health to you, Nancy Lavelle, and may your high valuation, only, debar you from drawing the aged pension. (*He drinks with relish*).

NANCY (*replaces bottle in hiding place, then motions him towards door back*) : Be moving now, before the twilight is smothered in the falling dark from the hills beyond.

MANUS (*goes to door back : Bridget Cuddigan appears at door right*) : It's back here I'll be returning for a royal carouse, though it's drunk I am already, from gazing on the beauty of yourself. (*Takes hat and blackthorn off case*).

NANCY (*pushes him towards door*) : You're a prize windbag, Manus Macky, though the honeyed words of flattery come smooth to your tongue. I'd better come and aid your search.

MANUS (*takes her arm and sings*) : Lonely was I, though fancy-free, till Nancy flashed her orbs on me.

(*They go out back, turning left. Bridget Cuddigan tiptoes stealthily to door back, and looks off left, then right*).

BRIDGET (*calls off conspiratorially*) : Coo-ee. Coo-ee . . . .

(*Festus Macky Mulchrone, a presentable young man of 21 a little less than average height, comes to door back*).

BRIDGET : I thought they'd never depart, with the power of windy talk was pouring from your uncle.

FESTUS (*slyly*) : He was in no great flurry to rescue my mortal remains from the stinking ditch.

BRIDGET : He was not surely. Is it Festus Macky Mulchrone is the full name is on you ?

FESTUS : You can call me Festy, Bridget Pat Joe, and I'll be calling you Bridgie. (*He comes inside the door*).

BRIDGET : Distracted I was inside, with one ear glued to the keyhole to gaff the slanders they were exchanging, and the other strained to catch the flirting words of love yourself was cooing to me through the weeshy window. Be coming forward now, and saying : God save all here.

FESTUS : (*comes towards table*) : God save you kindly, miss. (*Kisses her suddenly*). That's the way I know best how to say it.

BRIDGET (*pushes him away playfully*) : Hands off, young fellow. Be sitting over there, and let the chair be easing your weight.

FESTUS (*impishly, as he goes to chair before fire*) : Wouldn't it be holding both our weights, and no extra charge at all ?

BRIDGET (*taps his waistcoat*) : Look at that button, and it dangling like a bell-rope. Let you take off your waistcoat, till I sew it tight.

FESTUS (*sits before fire*) : Is it stripping half-naked you'd have me, in the seclusion of a private shebeen, and we not rightly tokened ?

BRIDGET : What naked are you saying ? Wouldn't you peel off coat and waistcoat, and your little sketch of a shirt maybe, and you limbering your fists at the start of a race-day dispute ?

FESTUS : I'm a man of peace, Bridgie, would liefer use my hands to caress, and not to be inflicting bruises at all.

BRIDGET : Off with that waistcoat I'm saying, this instant minute. (*She brings scissors, needle and thread from drawer*).

FESTUS (*goes into corner and turns his back to her*) : I'll be disrobing so, at your command. I hope no strange female darkens the door.

BRIDGET : I'll bolt it so, as you're so demure. (*Fastens door back, then takes waistcoat which he hands backwards to her*).

FESTUS (*resumes his coat*) : I hope my uncle won't return to find me in this delicate quandary. (*Sits before fire*).

BRIDGET : He's scouring the dykes and the hedges from here to where he left you coddling your chilblains, in a wayside house.

FESTUS (*with a laugh*) : Them was the queer chilblains. Two fine, frisky girls was billowing a blue towel to me, from the shadows of a barn door.

BRIDGET (*displeased*) : Making mock of you they were I'm thinking.

FESTUS : Edging up the boreen to them I was, when their foxy mother comes down the angle path. "Be hawking your sluthering smile in some other market," says she. Wasn't that an ungraceful thing to say to a boy is grooming himself for Hollwood ?

BRIDGET : If you've such a long travel ahead, why didn't you step into the comfort of the covered bus ?

FESTUS : My uncle said it wasn't safe travel. They'd drop us lost on the cobblestones of the highway.

Bridget : Let you tumble out, is it ? Sure the door is pulled every time a fresh traveller signals, and the latch put on after.



FESTUS : On the public press he saw it. " C. I. E.," he read out, "lost over two millions last year."

BRIDGET (*laughs*) : Sure that wasn't passengers ? That was only two millions of taxpayers' money.

FESTUS : Why did my uncle pretend 'twas persons, if 'twas mugs' money only ?

BRIDGET (*who has realised with disgust that there is no money sewn into the waistcoat lining, and is stitching it up again*) : I'm thinking he's more cunning than I fathomed, and I straining my ear against the draught of the keyhole.

FESTUS : He's a twisty and a treacherous customer, would humbug the haloed saints, and they perusing his travel passport at the gates of glory.

BRIDGET (*shakes waistcoat in annoyance*) : It's a skinflint he is, as well as a knaving liar would shame the shining truth. And all them hundreds he got, the week was before the one is in it now.

FESTUS : Is it hundreds of sterling you're saying ?

BRIDGET : For all them spacious acres, with grass so lofty you'd have to ascend an aeroplane to locate the grazing herds, and they lying to masticate their cud.

FESTUS : Sure my uncle never owned as much soil as'd sod a linnet ?

BRIDGET : And how did he make a living so ?

FESTUS : By his wiles and his wits. Doing sissy-work in quality houses, saying : (*Mimics*) : " The heated water, for to wash yourself with, is now being served, madam.."

BRIDGET : And he never sold a drift of beefy bullocks in the autumn fair of Ballintubber ?

FESTUS : I'm thinking when my uncle unfolds his litany of lies, that ancient varner, Ananias, is classified Grade C.

BRIDGET (*who has finished sewing the lining, and discovered that none of the waistcoat buttons is loose*) : I hope your kidneys aren't cold, but all the buttons are sewn now, as tight as the nine tailors of Tooley Street could attach them.

FESTUS (*takes waistcoat and puts it on*) : God spare you the health, Bridgie. That was a much-needed repair.

BRIDGET : And did your uncle never own even the one beast only ?

FESTUS : He did so. A barren stripper, was vacant in one eye, and missing on the cylinders of two teats, was bought from the squinty jobber, for the valuation of the hide.

BRIDGET : How could he graze a cow, and he without a perch of pasture ?

FESTUS : On the long acre of the public highway.

BRIDGET : That's a story I'm thinking. Wouldn't the reigning law prosecute him, for allowing her to stray on the thoroughfare of the public ?

FESTUS : That same they did surely. The convalescing cow lay on the highway verge when my uncle bought her at the fall of dusk. In the same identical spot she reclined at the height of the next day's noon, when the civic guard made his affidavit. That's why my uncle bet them all.

BRIDGET : Is it the counsellors of law he duped, with vanity wigs to hide their baldness ?

FESTUS : And white frill-fralls of neckwear, the likes of a lady waiter in a city feeding-house ? All them Uncle Manus bet, above in the Four High Courts of Dublin itself. " Tell me, your grace," he ups and says to the biggest judge of all, " could your Highness permit your great bulk of flesh to stray from the place it was in an hour ago, to the place you're in now, and they both the one place only ? "

BRIDGET : I'm thinking your uncle is a man of cunning, and he the right match to hoodwink yourself.

FESTUS : What's that you're saying, Bridget Pat Joe ?

BRIDGET : Why did he give out you were ugly enough to partner the jeering monkeys in a caged zoo ?

FESTUS : Pure jealousy I'm thinking. I inherit my share of looks from the mother's side. My profile doesn't favour the Mulchrones at all.

BRIDGET : And is that why he'll renage you on the gangway of the Glasgow steamer, with only a shilling between yourself and starvation, on the bonny banks of Clyde ?

FESTUS (*goes to her excitedly*) : Is that the truth you're saying ?

BRIDGET : Unless the truth gets twisted, in the turn of the key-hole. Planning to marry my aunt he is, and they scheming to throw us both desolate on the naked heartstone of the hungry world.

FESTUS : They do be saying it's hard to beat Banagher, but

that's done it. If there's a mortal way to thwart their dark design, we'll devise it before the light of this day fails.

BRIDGET : There's a simple way, and a certain way, surely. (*She hurries to door back and looks off*). They've put the ribs of the back hills north of them. They're searching down the gullies and under the kishes. (*Fastens door*).

FESTUS : Is it a safe devising, to cross them double, you have in mind ?

BRIDGET : As safe as houses was in it, before the second great war made the world unsafe for large nationalities. There's no living soul but the dark woman they call Black Ellen, holds the secret how to brew the yellow herb.

FESTUS : That's a peculiarity of mystery talk ?

BRIDGET (*intensely*) : Gathered in the one spot only it can be. Plucked from the butt of the black rock of Dooneybeg, at the crest of midnight when the moon is full, the tide at the furthest turn of its ebb, and the wind screeching from the north.

FESTUS : Is it a class of pishogue you're saying, from the wise women of the west, putting charms under the pillows of their born enemies ?

BRIDGET : It's a queer charm I'm saying, will work a stiff change in them both. (*Brings small bottle from hiding place*). It's in this weeshy bottle.

FESTUS : Any change in that nefarious couple would improve them. That's a small charm. (*Takes bottle and examines it*).

BRIDGET : Black Ellen brought it to my aunt, two Thursdays was before this Friday.

FESTUS : It looks innocent enough, the dead spit of spring water ?

BRIDGET : Great virtue there's in it surely. It persuades people into a hasty sleep, with luscious dreams, the likes would favour the opium-eaters of the eastern world.

FESTUS : And would it be like the morning from the night before, when the dream is shattered ?

BRIDGET : That'd depend on the kind of life they led in this world.

FESTUS (*startled*) : This—you're not saying it's deceased thay'd be

BRIDGET : A blissful ending, with the turmoil of the world safe behind them. Thanking us they should be, for bringing such a gorgeous finish to their time of living.

FESTUS (*hands bottle back to her*) : I'm regretful to disoblige you,

but I can't abet or assist that dastardly device. It's against the reigning law not to label that bottle : " Danger inside."

BRIDGET : What danger are you saying ? Sure there's no child in this house to be up to mischief ?

FESTUS : To down my uncle I'd face man, beast or bailiff in hut or hovel, but I've a righteous regard for the civic uniform. The guards would be nosing, and they getting a portfolio from the State Pathologist would detect the littlest grain of arsenic wouldn't choke a midge.

BRIDGET : How could he detect what he doesn't know, with the golden herb outside the handbooks of medicine, and in Black Ellen's knowledge only ? Any doctor's deposition'd only say : " No trace of any known poison."

FESTUS : And is there no wicked smell from it at all ?

BRIDGET (*hands him the small bottle again*) : Clap it to the test of your own nostrils.

FESTUS (*uncorks bottle and sniffs*) : There's a lovely fragrance from it, the likes would come from a honey hive in the sun of noon and the bees to be swarming.

BRIDGET : Given in poteen was made from barley malt it must be, with no stench of molasses from it at all.

FESTUS : I'd still be feared. The doctors'd detect the tinctures of alcohol in the remainders.

BRIDGET : If they did, wouldn't they say alcoholic poisoning ?

FESTUS : And that'd be an unsolicited testimonial, with alcoholic poisoning such an expensive end. But mightn't the law be suspicious, if they both succumbed so sudden ?

BRIDGET : Not if we composed a grand little notice for the paper, saying both departed blissfully in their peaceful dreams.

FESTUS : Two peaceful passings I'm thinking, would be too like a brace of holy miracles.

BRIDGET : So you'd rather your uncle decoyed you on the Sligo pier, and consigned you foreign like a mountainy bullock ?

FESTUS (*stung*) : I would not ! He tried to diddle me, terrible cunning. I'm thinking after all I'd like to oblige you.

BRIDGET : Bring the poteen so, is made of barley malt. It's in the south corner of the drawer yonder. (*Points to hiding place*).

FESTUS (*brings the large black bottle*) : Is there enough in your dandy bottle to silence the pair of them ?



BRIDGET (*gets two cups ready*) : I heard Black Ellen telling the strict directions. "Pour in," said she, "to the level depth of the width of your left thumb."

FESTUS : Wouldn't your right thumb be as deep as your left ?

BRIDGET : And where would your right thumb be, except gripped round the bulge of the bottle and you pouring ?

FESTUS (*goes to door back*) : I'd best make sure they're not ascending the hill below. (*Looks off*).

BRIDGET (*pours from small bottle into cup*) : We'll follow Ellen's prescription to the last letter. To the depth of the width of your left thumb. Then dissolve in the rale McCoy. (*Pours from large bottle into cup*).

FESTUS (*comes from door*) : They're not visible to the naked eye on the length of the highway. Don't be mean with their last one for the road. Does your aunt own much pasture land ?

BRIDGET : Not even starvation grazing for a tethered goat. The one potato patch only. That's ready for her now.

FESTUS : And is there no dry money in the house ?

BRIDGET : Sixty collected pounds, in the folds of her bosom. (*Gets second cup ready*). Has your uncle any at all ?

FESTUS : Ninety-odd sterling notes, in his chest pocket. (*Stops Bridget, who is about to pour from the small bottle into the second cup*). I'm thinking, Bridgie, you're forgetting an ancient law of hospitality.

BRIDGET (*bridling*) : Isn't it always the lady is served first ? You're maybe hinting my aunt is not a lady ?

FESTUS : I'm hinting that it's not a hospitable thing for you to be preparing a tonic the likes of that tonic for your aunt's guest.

BRIDGET (*contritely: hands him bottle and cup*) : I was forgetting my manners surely. Let yourself pour for him. They'll be in the back door if we're not handy. (*Hurries to door back and looks off*).

FESTUS (*preparing draught*) : 'Tis fitting surely that a man's thumb should be the measure for a man.

BRIDGET (*hurries from door back*) : Be quick I'm saying. They're passing the briary gap. Sit over to the fire, and be nursing your poor bunions. Take off one shoe and wrap that towel round your foot. (*Throws towel to him, then hides bottle*).

FESTUS (*obeying her*) : We'll be as honeyed to them as the warders

is to a condemned poor fellow, the night the hangman dines with the prison governor.

BRIDGET (*tidying room, etc.*) : We'll not thwart them at all. And let us both be remembering : If you linger you're lost.

(*Nancy Lavelle and Manus Macky Mulchrone come in back*).

MANUS : Is it there you are, you skulking sample of a sneaky bla'guard ?

BRIDGET : That's hardly a welcoming word, Mr. Mulchrone, to greet an invalid boy is paralysed with the septicness of his chilblains, and he crippled by two dogs was mad chased him through the treachery of the swamp of Ballyskeelin.

NANCY (*goes to Festus*) : It is poor Festy that's in it ?

FESTUS : Thanking you kindly, woman of the house, for the welcome under your hospitable roof. (*Fondles his foot*).

NANCY : Take off your lined waistcoat, Festy, till I sew on that button is as loose as a gumboil tooth.

FESTUS : Bridgie has sewn them all up, ma'am, and ne'er a one of them ever to be loose at all.

MANUS (*angrily*) : What's this talk about the boy's waistcoat ?

BRIDGET (*fussily*) : And the thoughtful present the poor boy has brought for the pair of you. (*Hands cup to each of them*) A lovely drop of mountain dew, was brewed by a stranger in the west has a new still and the barley malt.

MANUS (*sniffs at cup*) : It's a rare drop surely. The man has the art to distil this stuff should make a righteous fortune.

NANCY (*tastes liquid in cup*) : That's the true word coming out of you, Manus. (*Raises cup*). Your good health.

MANUS : Your very good health, Nancy Machree, and may our share increase and multiply. (*They clink cups and drink*).

NANCY : And did poor Festy have no refreshments at all ?

BRIDGET : Not even a small sup. He was feared there mightn't be enough for yourself and his darling uncle.

MANUS (*grudgingly*) : 'Twas a kindly thought, but a young fellow of his immaturity has no call for stimulations.

NANCY (*sits in chair by table*) : 'Twas a regal thought, Manus, a wish of generosity. Dear delights, what's after coming over me at all ?

BRIDGET (*stands watchfully beside her*) : You were up with the first crow of the white cock this blessed day. Maybe a little sleep would be to your good ?

NANCY : A sort of drowsiness is coming down on me. I think I'd like to stretch awhile on the bed. (*Stands unsteadily*).

BRIDGET (*guides her towards door left*) : That'll be best I'm thinking. I'll guide you, Aunt Nancy, as careful as if you were lame in your sight. (*She guides Nancy out left*).

MANUS : That's a strange coinciding surely. I feel in a sort of muddle myself. (*Sits on chair by table*).

FESTUS (*limps beside him*) : Maybe that barley malt was too rich, Uncle Manus? It might be the likes of them potent liquors the monks do be distilling in foreign lands?

MANUS : I wish there was a quiet class of place where I could lie down.

FESTUS : I'll assist you, uncle. (*Points to door right*). There's a bed in that room. (*Manus stands groggily*). I'll direct you, as safe as the licensed pilot of an ocean liner. I'll help you recline on the bed, as tender as if you were a limping child. (*They go out right*).

BRIDGET (*comes in left, with a bundle of notes, etc. in her hand. She places them on table as she continues counting*) : . . . . . And a fiver pound note is sixty-five, and three quids is sixty-seven, and two dirty ten-shilling notes is sixty-nine, and three half-crowns is ten shillings all but the one half-crown . . . (*Stuffs the money into her blouse as door right is opened*).

FESTUS (*comes in right, reading from large, soiled envelope*) : Ninety-four sterling notes, six florins and five pennies. (*Puts envelope in pocket*). Maybe I misjudged my poor uncle and he living. (*Sniffs*).

BRIDGET (*dabs eyes with handkerchief*) : Maybe I did likewise by my darling aunt? (*Tearfully*). Was there a lovely smile on your uncle's rugged face and he dozing into his last dream?

FESTUS (*Sobbingly, wipes eye with handkerchief*) : There was surely. I hope your aunt looked as happy as he did?

BRIDGET : You wouldn't know her for the same person, and she smiling as a child hadn't cut a tooth. I'd better fasten the back door. (*She does so*).

FESTUS : Isn't it a strange thing that people wouldn't be smiling more and they awake, with the numerous things there is to smile about?

BRIDGET : It is surely. But isn't it a lonesome thing to be thinking of a wake, with the fall of night drawing closer?

FESTUS : Twice as lonely and it to be a double wake.

BRIDGET : What double wake are you meaning ?

FESTUS (*testily*) : You're not saying that . . . ?

BRIDGET : I'm only saying your uncle isn't familiar in these parts, so I'm thinking it would be best to—to dispose of him privately.

FESTUS : This is the second time, Bridgie, I have to remind you of what's due to a guest under your aunt's hospitable roof.

BRIDGET : My aunt's potato patch has never been tilled as it ought, since my Uncle Dan died, God rest them all.

FESTUS : I noticed that identical lapse, and I passing.

BRIDGET : 'Twould be well I'm thinking to dig the whole garden.

FESTUS : Maybe that'd be best surely ? A wake does be very costly, even with poteen is made from molasses. There'll be a fine flow of brightness in it this night from the risen moon.

BRIDGET : Even a civic sergeant, craning his neck above the lofty summit of the fence, would only say : " Isn't that a queer thing ? Nancy the Shebeen had no such industrious gardener and she living, as she had and she departed."

FESTUS : I'll dig it deep surely, no matter who'll reap the reward of my labour, in a fine heavy crop.

(*Sharp knocking on door back. Bridget and Festus rush confusedly through the room, hiding the cups, seeing doors right and left are fastened, etc. The knocking is repeated.*)

BRIDGET (*goes to door back : dubiously*) : Did I hear somebody outside ?

VOICE OFF : Ellen O'Counahan, the wise woman of Carrigaroon, is here in person.

BRIDGET (*relieved : opens door fussily*) : I'm sorry, Ellen, I—I thought 'twas only a stravinging tramp passing the way. (*Ellen O'Counahan, a hag bent with age and dressed in black, with a shawl fastened round her head, hobbles in leaning heavily on a stick. She looks cunningly at each of them in turn.*)

ELLEN (*slyly*) : I'm thinking you two didn't waste much of the passing time ? (*She looks at Festus*). Still, it's a fine thing, I'm saying, to have a strong arm, and (*She looks at Bridget*) it's a thrilling thing to have a supple waist to curve it round. Ha, ha, ha. Black Ellen was a plump little piece and she a saucy youngster. (*Suddenly*). Is your aunt within ?



BRIDGET : She—she's not very well, Ellen. She got a sudden turn round her heart a while since.

FESTUS : I heard it said that poteen'll *poison* the heart, and you to be a fierce and a secret toper.

BRIDGET : What was it you'd be wanting with her ?

ELLEN : Only to hope she didn't use any of the silver brew I brought her, three Thursdays come next Thursday.

BRIDGET : Silver brew you're saying ? You brought her the brew of the golden herb.

ELLEN : Wasn't that my blunder ? I gave her the wrong potion, the bogus draught surely.

BRIDGET : And what would the—the silver brew do to anybody would drink it by mistake ?

ELLEN (*meaningly*) : By mistake or no mistake, it does little but bring the devil's own rage on them.

FESTUS : Would they be waking up down—down here ?

ELLEN : They come conscious from a dream of delight, singing a line, or two lines maybe, of the song they know best. Then, with a spasm of a shudder, it rushes to them that they've been duped.

BRIDGET : And how long would the—the dream be lasting ?

ELLEN : Only for two times the length a tooth-smith'd mesmerise you. Then, a wild and a mad surge will rise in them, to destroy whoever planned the mockery. They'll seize the first weapon they behold, and nothing'll stay their urge to slay and to destroy. The first person they lay sight on—that's the one will be their victim. I'm leaving the right brew this time. (*She puts a small bottle into the hiding place*) :

BRIDGET : Take whatever my aunt owes you. You'll find money in one of the canisters on the dresser. (*Ellen takes tins from dresser, and kneels before the fire as she searches them*).

NANCY (*sings off in room left*) : “ But where will you find a fine widow like me, Mrs. Mulligan the Pride of the Coombe ? ”

FESTUS (*replaces his shoe hastily*) : I'm thinking, Bridgie, without the verdict of the medical health Ministry, this house will soon be unfit for human habitation.

BRIDGET (*puts on hat and coat, and collects items into parcel*) : Is it the rocky road to Dublin we'll be taking ?

FESTUS : Not the rocky, but the rosy road, and I promised an audition permit for "Beginners Please."

MANUS (*sings off in room right*) : "Bold Phelim Brady, the Bard of Armagh."

BRIDGET (*fastens her parcel*) : That's a queer beginner. I hope 't isn't spouting blathery poems, like himself, you'll be in Dublin city itself?

FESTUS (*takes up case which is inside door back*) : My poems will be sung by the minstrel boys of Ireland. Not by scruffy ballad mongers, to snivelling youngsters in the clawber at the heel-end of a harvest fair. And not to tipsy brawlers, would be swilling porter in the mildewed pubs. But onto the waxy records in the mobile recording unit. We're on our way, Bridgie. (*He sweeps Bridget before him as he goes out back*).

ELLEN (*testily*) : Be going your way I'm saying, and good riddance (*To herself as she examines contents of canisters*) : Two ha' pennies is bent, one penny is bad, one thrupenny piece was minted by the King of Korea, one sixpenny bit . . . . (*There is a bump off left. Ellen O'Counahan looks apprehensively at door left, then collects the coins and begins to hobble furtively towards door back. Nancy Lavelle appears at door Left, a poker in her hand*).

NANCY : Black Ellen, the fairy woman of Carrigaroon ! 'Twas yourself simmered the hemlock brew has me destroyed surely. That'll be the last potion you'll devise, and you a living human.

ELLEN : Put down that poker, I'm saying. Put it down ! (*She limps out back, pursued by Nancy. Manus appears at door right, gripping the blackthorn stick. Nancy halts near door back*).

MANUS (*brandishing blackthorn*) : Nancy the Shebeen ! The distiller of the noxious nectar has brought ruination on myself.

NANCY (*shaking poker at him*) : Keep off, I'm saying. Keep off.

MANUS : There's a great glow of strength still left in my arm, and a fine weapon in my hand would destroy half the living world. (*He approaches her menacingly, and she fends him off as the curtain falls quickly. A woman's scream is heard, then a thud*).

THE END

# ‘THE ENVIRONMENT, THE PAINTER, AND THE PICTURE’

*By Brian O’Doherty*

WITHOUT the senses environment would not exist. Without environment, reality would be limited to an internal awareness, free-floating and unformed, lacking the abstractions from material things which enable awareness to function. It is the tremendous reality of the perceptive senses which, at the beginning, liberates and equips each separate mind with the weapons to exist in internal freedom. It is, perhaps, to some degree paradoxical that before finding the liberation of the intellectual life one must first take off, as it were, from the spring-board of sensory perceptions. From the material one ascends to the immaterial, from the object to the abstract, from the blinding reality of the external to the blinding reality of the internal.

Thus philosophers have treated the phenomenal nature of sensation with deep respect, have given it in their scheme of things the just honour of a thing limited by function, yet the instrument of transcendence. Thus, far more obviously, the actual wonder of sensory perception, the immediacy of its limited yet phenomenal nature, is to the artist of palpably more significance. The philosopher gives the senses their due as they have liberated him. The artist finds their liberating action is in the very manner in which they limit and tie him down to externals. The intellectual pays the senses intellectual homage ; the artist pays them the greater homage of love.

Hence the sensational character of all art—the controlled intuitive flash which lights and organises a whole field of sensory perceptions ; hence also the metamorphosis of externals through the whole organism, conscious and unconscious, so that they become the properties of a world as far removed from nature as the processes of thought themselves. What the mind has made from the sensory data is as different from brute matter as a proposition of thermodynamics is from a fire.



This stream of sensory perception does not, of course, exist in itself as mere sensation. Elaborate patterns of emotion, memory instinct, and feeling, become—through experience—attached to sensory perceptions, gaining in complexity with the passage of time, until we eventually exist over a compound shifting field of internal somatic patterns, varying with the flux and re-flux of the external world impinging on us through sensation. Through experience much of this pattern becomes habitually familiar, and sinks to intermediate and unconscious levels.

Thus one can understand the attempts of the intellectually jaded to renew lost wonder in sensation by seeking new sensation, and recovering thus something of the youth of the senses. Thus again can one dimly understand the continual excitement of the artist to his sensory life, the heady emotional fields of feeling which are attached to even the most common objects, for an artist is an artist because he is highly sensitive, his sensory perceptions have the astonishing property of being always renewed in wonder, the patterns remain more conscious than unconscious ; for him natural phenomena remain phenomena. Like a child he walks his world in a fluid state of excitement and of wonder. For the rest of us, this quality of wonder disappears.

In men of particular disposition and habit, the onset of old age is occasionally marked by the recurrence of wonder. I do not here mean childishness, which is a different thing having a pathological and physiological basis, but rather the development out of the complexities of experience of an inclusive simplicity, which illuminates the rest of the personality. To watch the development of this quality of simplicity and wonder in old age is one of the most heartrending of human experiences, for here these qualities which have so much of the principle of youth in them, exist in the shadow of extinction.

. . . . .

I have mentioned that the external stream passes, as it were, in an avalanche through the senses, and that in childhood the newness, the discovery of it, makes us exist in a constant state of wonder ; and that although this stream continues to pass unabated through our sensory channels, it is a function of time that the reactions to such sensations sink through familiarity to

less conscious levels where they are taken for granted and ignored. For the pictorial artist the wonder of his sensations persists as a result of his sensitivity, or in the neurological sense, his irritability. This concept is, however, too somatic. It is too limited unless we extend the term 'sensitivity' to include more than intense automatic fields of feeling arising out of sensory perceptions.

The process of becoming a mature entity does, of necessity, involve pain. Pain on the somatic level which we have just been defining, and pain on a higher emotional plane resulting from the accidents of human relations and from the strains of intellectual conflicts. It is pain on the higher plane, arising ultimately out of externals, which far more than somatic contacts shapes, reforms, moulds, remakes, or destroys the individual mind. It is from its pressures, it is from the reaction to its action, it is from the equation of its effects, that there eventually arises out of it the thing we call a man.

The possibilities of differential response determine the direction of an individual's development. The experience of pain illustrates the point. The individual's reaction to stress may be disintegration, or it may be stoical tolerance, or it may be an active response. He may do something about it. By this latter I mean the active direction of the emotion into channels which integrate rather than disintegrate, which purge the emotions in the way (though with more intensity) that theatrical tragedy purges them. Such usage of emotion adds to the individual's humanity.

We are all formed from experience, we cannot reject, we can only modify; for rejection implies a loss, a loss not only of the value of experience, but an immediate and terrible loss of completeness. It is the mark of the great artist that he never does himself the violence of trying to reject; aware of the essence of personality, circumscribing all his experience, he completes himself.

Artistic personality is related to, quite simply, personality. The maturing of the individual personality involves to a greater or a lesser degree, a maturing of the artistic personality—but it must be distinctly stated here that the development of the artistic personality does not include technical maturity, which is a similar development of different executive sectors of personality. However, just as there is a relation between the development of general personality and the development of the artistic personality,

so similarly there is a relation between the development of the personality to its artistic maturity and to its technical maturity ; and the development of these latter two often runs side by side, although usually there is a delay before technical artistic maturity is evolved.

I speak then of personality maturity, which is an integration of the personality to the mechanics of living, and which is concerned with life rather than art ; and I speak of artistic personality maturity, which is an integration—and perhaps a re-integration—of the personality to all experience, breeding predominant strains of inclusive feeling which *are* the artist's vision. And technical artistic maturity is the further development of the habit of art to include and hold—and prove capable of holding—within it, that vision.

The organisation of a vision into a technically suited channel results in a style, and the deepening of this channel to carry more truly the persisting vision results in the further purity of the style. This style is the essence of art and the pinnacle of artistic activity. Style is the functioning of vision through a suitable executive. Style is the result of vision, vision is not the result of style. It is the vision which forms the style—forms is used here quite literally—and this formation involves technique. Thus the confusion by many critics of style *with* technique. The vision can exist alone. Its externalisation involves, as I have said, technique, which cannot exist alone. Technique in style is an aspect of vision. The vision when externalised exists in style ; they are intimately mixed like a body and soul. They cannot be separated, except insofar as to consider their related aspects. Perhaps in one direction the next logical step would be to affirm that vision *is* style, but I think that this is a mistake ; a rough analogy would be the confusion of the thought of an object *with* the object. But one can say with certainty that the expression of a vision through style constitutes the objective self-sufficient organic external existence of a work of art.

It may be objected that this conception of vision and style only holds true for individual examples of a humanist epoch, which ended in art about fifty years ago. But all that I have said applies even more strongly to the great communal styles, the Byzantine, the Romanesque, the Gothic. For these were the result of a communal rather than an individual vision, a trans-

endant and directly religious vision, more organised and inclusive than any individual vision can be. And the style which each of these related visions formulated, developed (since this was a matter of centuries instead of decades) to an extraordinary degree of purity—and purity of style is the artistic ideal. We are not here concerned with the influences which are metamorphosed into the dynamic reality of a living new style, or how, through the use of symbolic form, these three great styles are so widely inclusive.

The shift from the communal styles to the individual style is the shift from the community to the individual, from the collective unit to the individual unit, from San Vitale to Leonardo. The principle is the same ; the scale is larger. The universe passes in one case through a communal mind, and in the other through a single mind.

. . . . .

That external universe began to pass through the senses to the mind of Rembrandt van Rijn—for I am going to take Rembrandt and a few of his pictures to illustrate what has gone before—in (although this year of birth is sometimes contested) 1606 ; and from there we follow him through a sum of experience which cannot be termed even moderately pleasant. We see him studying under von Swanenburch from sixteen to eighteen, and then for a short while with Lastman in Amsterdam, before returning to Leyden again. At the mature age of twenty-two we see him receiving his first pupil, and at the age of twenty-five he moved again from Leyden to Amsterdam, where he lived for the remainder of his life. Two years later the young painter, moderately prosperous, married Saskia van Uylenborch, who after bearing him four children—three of whom died in infancy—died herself after eight years of marriage. Rembrandt was then thirty-six, and the shadows had begun to gather. By the time he was forty-one Saskia's relatives had begun to trouble him about his administration of her estate ; two years later he survived a breach of promise action brought by a woman of inferior station, whom he had employed as a nurse ; at forty-six he probably married his mistress, Hendrickje Stoffels, who had already borne him a child ; and by this time his work had ceased to find favour. In his fiftieth



year he was declared bankrupt ; and six years later his second wife died. Saskia's son, Titus married, and died in the same year, when Rembrandt was sixty-two. The following year, the painter himself—almost destitute—died. These are the minimal individual units of his environmental sequence, and apart from one brief period between two of them, it is not a happy one.

There is—or was—in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna a self-portrait which Rembrandt painted between 1666 and 1668, and it is with this picture rather than with the accidentals of his life that we are primarily concerned—but I will repeat that he died in 1669. I have mentioned the preceding externals only to show some of the environmental components of its creator's life at the time it was painted.

Looking at this picture the incidentals of Rembrandt's life vanish and one undergoes a metamorphosis, the picture becomes the cosmos, and for one still sublimated moment there is an awareness of intense sensory intoxication and deep intellectual pleasure, which are reactions to purely formal qualities. And then through the action of these qualities, which are assembled not to exist in themselves but to hold within them something further, there comes, not in a blinding flash but in a slow exhalation from these forms into other mental fields, transient feelings, intuitive half-sensed things, fugitive sensations of awareness of absences, which swirling about these plastic and unchanging forms, as the odour of a rose follows its visual apprehension, heighten one's awareness and perceptive level, until out of these forms, again as peculiar to them as is the scent of a rose to a rose, one becomes aware of all the pain and travail of the human condition, and with the artist one seems to suffer for all humanity.

This painting, apart from sensuously pleasing, does for a time lessen out mortality ; it is a plastic equivalent holding within its integrated forms the awareness of human impermanence, the awareness of the inevitability of human disillusion, the awareness of a dozen other half-formulated things existing deep in these fields of associative feeling and emotion of which I have already spoken. But although these psychological qualities are contained in the picture and arise out of its forms, and the awareness of these psychological qualities complements the contemplation of the forms to a certain degree, there is a stage beyond which the psychological becomes divorced from the form and thus free-

floating wanders through chains of conscious and unconscious associative processes ; and these as they progress are separated farther and farther from the formal and real content of the picture.

The classical instance of this is, of course, Walter Pater's outburst before the Mona Lisa, a journey into his own, formally unrelated, associative tracts. When a picture's forms carry with them psychological content such unrelated and literary criticism can only be avoided by a constant renewal of formal contemplation of the actual picture, its forms are the anchor which prevents such mental drifting, when the mind's eye turns too wholly inward. After all studying a picture implies a continuous act of looking. Many critical sins are a consequence of not smoothing the mind sufficiently to let one's formal sense predominate before beginning to look, and many more are a consequence of not continuing to look—or should I say, to see.

From a purely formal aspect the exhilaration of this picture lies in its ordered disposition of fluid light, the plasticity of its shadows, its rightness of space relative to form, the tremendous tactile awareness of the spherical volume of the head in space, the restrained richness of the pure sensations of colour indivisibly related and relevant to forms, mood, impulse. But these things compose a style which has arisen, in Rembrandt's case, out of a vision which has a distinct psychological as well as formal basis. It is a vision which cannot be put into words, or this picture would not have been painted, it would have been written, but it does involve, as I have tried to suggest, the sad wonder of disillusion and pity. And in considering this vision there is no reason why one should ignore, within the limit of its forms, its psychological component. One cannot approach every picture from the modern aesthetic viewpoint at the extreme of that viewpoint. One can only approach a picture with humility, for each picture holds within it its implicit values, and very quickly one perceives whether or no it is valueless.

Thus a group of modern abstractionists endeavours to eliminate all subjective somatic emotion and associated images, and to include exclusively within the picture values related to geometric concepts of the dynamism of intellectual function—though not at the level of geometric reasoning. And they seek only to involve such emotions as have been intellectually purged and sublimated beyond the still tense threshold of non-associative

form. Here the values are again implicit, and with contemplation one discovers them, and in turn, submits to them. But when associative form is used there is also implied, apart from purely formal relations, the relation arising out of the common associative function of these forms. The purist extreme would call Rembrandt's picture 'Play of Light over an Irregular Surface', but when that surface is a human face, obviously associative complications arise. And I cannot but believe that, within the limits of his forms, the artist meant them to arise. Here is a formulated vision, embodied in a perfect style, and we experience intensely through its particulars, contact with that vision, which for a time becomes our vision, and is placed over the world.

But this vision is a resultant of forces, a consequence of environmental stimuli with one, out of a number, of reactions. On the adventitious occasion of external circumstance depends the suppression or flowering of separate aspects of character. A shift in circumstance brings to bear on the organism different strains and tensions which develop differently the internal awareness, presiding over similarly altered fields of feeling. Thus the unique and indivisible fusion which each one of us has, of necessity, to partake in with our environment; thus inevitably, does each pictorial artist become indivisibly fused to his moment of time. Thus, out of his reaction to it, is formed his vision.

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It only remains to point out the effect of circumstances which we have already enumerated, on an organism of intense psychological and formal sensitivity. It is reasonable to conjecture that Rembrandt's reaction to the mounting tragedies of his life was formative and not destructive. The successive stimuli to the naked nerves of feeling provoked in him an artistic sublimation which implies some degree of personality sublimation. Whether this personality development involved true maturity in the actual business of living one cannot say; again one can conjecture that it led him no farther than acceptance—it did not lead to positive action directed to alter his fallen condition. But I think that one may safely assume that the very fact of acceptance involved a deepening of personality and feeling which were actively directed towards the completion of the artistic personality,

as I described it earlier. And it is not well enough known that the struggles involved in attaining the maturity of the artistic personality are no less intense than those through which personality maturity is gained. The tremendous struggle all along the process of externalisation of a picture has as many phases and levels as the struggle towards completion of the entire personality. And it is also a fact that while engaged in this creative struggle one's time for anything else is considerably lessened.

Thus all great artists are, in the artistic world, saints. They have developed their vision through experience, they have sacrificed to that vision, and they have suffered in externalising it.

The technical aspect of Rembrandt's artistic personality developed early. There is, in the Dublin National Gallery, a 'Portrait of a Young Woman' from his early maturity, so delicately painted with a high degree of formal and dimensional sense that it is already far in advance of what his immediate contemporaries were doing. It also shows quite a considerable degree of psychological insight and perception. But what I merely wish to remark here is the complete consonance of technique with what is said. The native possession of high executive potential—or talent—presumed a rapid development of technique to suit whatever vision was formed; here the vision is already subtle and quite profound, here to suit it is a subtle and delicate technical control. It is already the picture of a master, and is, I think, a masterpiece, but before his death Rembrandt was to formulate out of his experience a vision and consequent technique which was to make him a far greater master. His artistic personality was to be developed to the full.

Here in this picture his technique is already fully mature; it was ready to adapt itself to any internal change. The discovery of the full plasticity of shadow and the discovery of the possibilities of light opposed to shadow were not a further maturing of technique but a further maturing of artistic personality. And this latter arose out of sublimative processes directed on it, these processes being again a consequence of the dynamism of reactions to painful external stimuli. The Vienna picture, the last self-portrait he painted, is the result of the complete maturity of the artistic personality, of acceptance of pain with all else; and it is the result of the environment-personality relationship which I have tried to elucidate. What the maturity of his entire person-



ality developed to—we cannot know ; one has only to remember the inflexible artistic personality of, for instance, Modigliani, compared to his complete absence of entire personality maturity to realise how great can be the discrepancy, the lack of direct proportion, between them.

I have dealt only with Rembrandt's immediate environment ; I have not dealt with the shifting principles of chance which formed the stage on which his life was lived. A hundred years earlier that stage would not have been so politically peaceful and calm. In studying the work of any individual artist it is necessary, if one wishes to be complete, to systematise a concentric number of environmental circles, which widening centrifugally from the internal living core, eventually lap against far shores of social history, political history, economics and half-a-dozen other sciences. Thus one can follow the golden thread of chance through the labyrinth of history to, for instance, that moment in 1573 when Phillip II recalled the Duke of Alva from a ravaged Netherlands, and wonder how different would the final art of Rembrandt have been if Alva had been allowed to stay. But out of its infinitude of possibilities history followed its single course to increasing peace in Rembrandt's lifetime, and to increasing wealth and power for the new Dutch Republic. Thus his art developed with the growth of a national consciousness and pride, it did not suffer from the tensities and frictions of external strife and national unease.

The attitude of genius to its environment is complex, involving a constant reorientation, a redisposition, an unceasing series of adjustments which are necessary if that genius is to remain artistically healthy and resonant. For there is nothing static in time, and it is in one aspect the degree of adjustment to the constant flux and re-flux, the cycles and changes of environment against which the short course of our lives is measured, which constitutes artistic distinction. And though this inseparable fusion with environment takes place for each one of us, it is a paradox that that which confines us to our particular moment of time bears within it—and especially if we are artists—the principle which enables us to transcend it.

# VICTORIAN

*By Marten Cumberland*

HE BECAME a stock jobber by profession, and so was the first of the family to 'go in for trade'. In those days you might know every member of the London Stock Exchange by sight. Silk hats were *de rigueur*. Business was usually transacted in bars and wine lodges. Tea and coffee were neither in popular demand nor readily obtainable. Habits of fairly heavy drinking distressed my friend.

He must have been over forty when I first met him. A distinguished looking man, though short, he had a heavy, greying moustache, and sentimental brown eyes. It pleased him if anyone suggested he resembled the Duke of Connaught. In matters of religion he was a fairly strict Unitarian. Perhaps this accounted for the rather pathetic light in his mild eyes; for he was certainly a sensualist yet knew inner strivings towards an unrealisable perfection.

He had no humour whatever. But, very rarely, a trifle would titillate his sense of the ridiculous, and then he would laugh immoderately. Tears would run; and he would rub his smooth hands together, after the manner of the sensualist.

In accordance with contemporary fashion he had been 'finished off' at a German university. He spoke the language like a native, and had many German friends. He regarded them as quiet, studious, pipe-smoking, music-loving folk. Of French he had a scholarly knowledge, and was fairly fluent, though Parisian waiters might prove difficult to communicate with.

There was a good library in his London house and more books in the bungalow at Woodhall Spa, where he bred horses (as a hobby) and sold them at Tattersall's. His favourite authors were Milton, Shakespeare, Dr. Johnson (*Lives Of The Poets*), and Ruskin. The worn volumes were enriched by notes, in his small, neat handwriting, which filled margins and overflowed upon scraps of paper, turning yellow at the edges.

He had a gift for water colours and exhibited together with other Stock Exchange artists. He illuminated letters with skill, and never went on holiday without a sketch-book. His china

was wisely collected, but not the pictures for which he paid fairly large sums. His playing of the banjo was justly famed. Nor did he neglect sport for, besides breeding horses, he was also an excellent shot and a cunning fly-fisher. Top of his London house was a room given over to carpentry, the bench made with his own broad, white hands.

His courtesy was of a quality never likely to be seen again. Very largely this was due to his being the perfect listener. Despite his natural taste for 'flappers', he would sit beside the oldest and plainest woman in the room, drinking in every word she uttered. His eyebrows rose as she told him about her sluggish liver. He registered astonishment at the revelation of some domestic's 'ingratitude'.

He would have rivalled Lord Chesterfield, but for one fault. He ate ravenously. It was a strain for any carving host. 'Ready for a little more?' asked the carver, and the question was redundant. Under that grey moustache food and wine passed at an amazing speed. He was knowledgeable, too, about both. And, for his gout, he went to Carlsbad or Buxton.

Although small in stature he possessed considerable strength. A strong swimmer he would get himself rowed out to sea and then dive overboard. He liked deep water, and claimed the sea was good for his rheumatism. His square-set body was covered with hair, like that of an ape. Until an advanced age he bathed, summer and winter, in Hyde Park, often swimming in the Serpentine Lake when the ice had to be broken.

Throgmorton Street knew him affectionately as 'The Credulous Jobber'. He was strictly honorable in business matters, and seemed incapable of believing anyone would try to swindle him. All his sinning was uncommercial (on his side) and was connected with fringed barmails and chorus girls from Daly's and the Alhambra.

Those were the days of what were called 'practical jokes', and his simplicity and lack of humour exposed him at times to a certain amount of horseplay. Also he was opposed to Imperialism; and as a 'Little Englander', he may have been regarded as unpatriotic. More respected than loved he was victimised frequently by high-spirited brokers of the non-adult type. During a boom in the Kaffir market a humorist repeatedly extracted the pencil from his pocket and broke the lead point. My friend could

not record bargains. It was a long time before he detected the 'joke'. He lost money.

All his life he lost money. He was never intended by Nature to make it. No man was ever less fitted to deal with stock markets, race horses, and music-hall sirens. When he was not losing money by speculation, he was giving it away. To a professional lady with a hard-up story he once gave forty pounds, that he happened to have in his wallet, as he walked through Leicester Square. This was probably his sole commerce with the lady, and it expressed a sentimental moment. But, with characteristic naïvety, he related the incident to his wife. Ever afterwards her legitimate desires for feathered toque or chinchilla wrap were backed, if need be, by powerful arguments.

Cash flowed through those soft fingers of his in a gentle, steady stream, punctuated by occasional, catastrophic floods. At King Edward's coronation he invested ten thousand pounds in grandstand seats. A 'good thing',—for everyone else. What happened to my friend's speculation is uncertain. Maybe his arrangements about tickets were faulty. Perhaps the police were not adequately 'taken care of'. For hours his red-draped planks stood empty, whilst all others were filled. Then the crowd rushed his seats. 'The Credulous Jobber' had to return every penny he had taken.

He was a man upright and fair, according to his lights. But, somehow, those lights were dimmed by a certain failure in imaginative qualities and perceptions. He could be narrow, and implacably obstinate. At times his dignity declined into pomposity. He tried to play the domestic tyrant. He told me he read Ruskin 'for his style, not for his meaning'. 'The Credulous Jobber' believed Socialism would destroy individuality, and maintained that all labour disputes were contrived by foreign agitators. He sympathised with the Boers, as victims of Imperialism—and, among such victims, he may later have included the German nation.

He had a fondness for women, horses, Bavarians, Gilbert and Sullivan, a small navy, a large cigar and a sound claret. He hated lies, jokes, economy, music, Joseph Chamberlain and the Crystal Palace.

He ended, of course, as the nominal proprietor of a small boarding-house on the South Coast. It was inevitable. It needed



far less than a World War (and a World Peace) to strip away the little that decades of reckless visits to Throgmorton Street had left to him. But he was not 'hammered'. He paid his 'differences' and all other debts, and got to the seaside with some very decent pieces of china.

One saw him there occasionally, talking to local shopkeepers and advising them about their investments. Or sitting in the 'lounge', his head gravely inclined as a lady paying-guest spoke of her ailments and doctor's orders. On his shelves reposed Milton and Ruskin, beside a row of Stock Exchange Year Books and *The Horse In Field And Stable*. Upstairs was a deed box, carefully padlocked and filled with once costly mining shares. Here, too, the guns rusted, the fishing-rods withered, and the banjo, in its black leather case, slowly disintegrated.

But 'The Credulous Jobber' never suffered the worst indignities or degradation of poverty. His wife saved the boarding-house.

## SEARCHING FOR A CITY

*By John Stewart Collis*

I HAVE wished that my search had been less real, and that that which I found had not been there. But he who seeks for a city and finds it where I found it may not complain, and though its streets remain for ever silent, I still bow with reverence before the Mystery of Design.

I have just been reading a description of the last descent of lava down Mount Vesuvius. An experience of my own bears out the truth of some of these statements. For I saw at close quarters the eruption of Mount Etna in 1928. In a certain way the experience stands rather by itself, I think, and might hold attention even today and promote perspective regarding our own modes of terror, ruin, and spoliation.

I approached the locality of Mount Etna through regions where Man had come to a remarkable understanding with Nature. Every rock, every cliff and cleft, every yard of soil seemed to

have joined with man in the making of vineyards. On the level and the almost perpendicular grape-trees were succoured by nature and supported by man. Sometimes high crags turned into castles, On rock and ledge and shoulder houses clung like flowers.

I reached the mountain village of Taormina, a lovely thought made manifest. Looking south, two ridges away I could see Mount Etna, domed with snow. And there also, even up to the snow, vines were laced. From the middle, half-way down the mountain, the Eruption sprang. From this distance it looked in the day-time like a big bonfire trailing smokily down to the sea. At night it was a waterfall of fire.

I determined to do two things : to reach the spot where the lava burst out ; and to see what was left of the town called Mascali, which was reported to have been destroyed. I was resolved, whatever the obstacles, to do those two things.

My initial endeavours to accomplish this on my own proved laughably futile. But at length I found, and joined, a German journalist who was making the same attempt with guides. We motored with Italian abandonment to speed along impossible roads and through mountain villages, until the track stopped even our driver. For some time we walked along a road with walls on each side enclosing lemon and orange orchards—the normal scene in these parts.

Suddenly the walls, the orchards, and our road were stopped dead by something very like a huge railway embankment. It was composed of a sort of charcoal. I climbed on to it. It did not burn my shoes. This was my first experience of lava.

The next thing to do was to follow it up to its source. After climbing over the vine and orchard walls higher and higher for some distance beside the embankment, I tried walking on the lava again. This time it was too hot. Standing on a ledge and getting a good view of it I saw a portion, about the width of the Thames at Charing Cross, *slowly moving downwards*. My part was steady, though rather hot. Down there in the centre it was all moving. Its red heat could be seen even in the sunlight. I was interested also in its silence, its quantity, and its power.

At this point the guides said it was dangerous to go any farther and get nearer the source. So I did what I often do with guides, both temporal and spiritual—went on without them. Also leaving the German journalist behind.

It was not long before I actually did reach the source from which the lava burst. The smoke, which had been gathering, became thick and sulphur-like. Hot little peaks and valleys of charcoal composed my world. I drew near the pit now. The smoke became too hard on the throat, and sticking a handkerchief into my mouth I advanced. I dimly saw a stream of grey stuff coming out of a cave in the mountain-side. I got nearer ; and now I heard a noise as of men throwing gravel down a shaft into a ship at the wharf—unmistakable sounds of men at work where no men could be at work. I retired through the sulphurous air, catching sight while doing so of the chill, fresh snow above.

Now for my second task—to find Mascali. It was a queer journey and a strange quest. I saw the same thing all the way down : walls, roads, and orchards suddenly ending, and the embankment of charcoal in their place obliterating everything. Sometimes a farmhouse would be half-submerged or standing on the fringe quite untouched with a tree at the front door, while another tree a few yards farther on was bent down under the weight of the edge of the lava, and the tree in front of it might be only revealing its crest. I even saw, what one hears of so often, a Madonna and Child, placed in a nook in a wall, just escaping destruction. Nothing was burnt. This bush would be overthrown, that one a yard away not even singed ; this house submerged, its neighbour still inhabited.

I climbed on to the lava again hoping to catch sight of Mascali's highest buildings. I could see a long way as over a desolate moor, so wide was the " river " now. If a moor is desolate, what of this ! Here was no wild life, nor stray donkey, nor bird. I saw again that the middle was slowly moving. Near the bottom, I had heard, it advanced a few hundred yards a day. Before it reached a house the inhabitants would remove the windows and doors for future use. Then entering in, creeping surely, creeping slowly, the monster would advance, and soon that house would exist no more. The slowness with which it moved made it both safer and more terrible.

Darkness was coming on and still I could not find Mascali. I got back to a road where I met some people who said that all the town had been destroyed, nothing of it could be seen. Not believing this, I continued to run down by the lava-side. It made an eerie search. I met no one : the silence, the solitude, and the

dusk were principalities making ghost-work of the black mass on my right, the suddenly ending walls, the half-buried farms, the orchards turned to stone.

Once more I climbed up and looked round. Waterfalls of fire flowed in the darkness, and high above at the source flames flapped out from the belching shaft. I looked round once more for Mascali—and still in vain. But now I saw a man who also walked upon the lava approaching me. To him I addressed my everlasting question: Where is Mascali? *Dove é Mascali?* This time I was answered. He pointed to the ground on which we stood. Mascali was beneath my feet.

## DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

By A. J. Leventhal.

HENRY IV. By Luigi Pirandello. Gate Theatre.

JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK. By Sean O'Casey. Radio Eireann.

WE DIG FOR THE STARS. By T. B. Morris. Pike Theatre Club.

AIRS ON A SHOESTRING. An intimate Revue by Laurier Lister. Olympia Theatre.

As I watched *Henry IV* by Pirandello there was still latent within me the memory of the excitement which I felt some 25 years ago after I had seen the same play at the Abbey Theatre with Lennox Robinson playing the chief part. That evening long ago at the Abbey was a triumph for Lennox Robinson who demonstrated that he could act as well as he could write. *Henry IV* is a one-man play. The whole action centres on the complex character of the name part. The understanding of psychology is so up to date that it is difficult to believe that this play had its first performance in Italy in 1922. In those days scientists were still struggling to find the formula for splitting the atom. Pirandello however anticipated them in another splitting operation—one which was engaging the attention of the psychiatrists of the time—namely, the splitting of the personality. In none of his plays has he used schizophrenia with such telling dramatic effect as in *Henry IV*. The programme describes the play as a masquerade but I doubt if Pirandello called it anything else but a tragedy. It is a tragedy—the tragedy of Henry IV's soul. The hero is at war with himself. It is a conflict between reality and illusion over which there hangs inevitable fate, the destiny which we associate



with Greek tragedy. The time of the play is the present and it is as a result of an accident while taking part in a pageant in which he acted the part of Henry IV of Germany that he believes himself to be the actual medieval Emperor. Thenceforth he lives in seclusion with his servants who collaborate in keeping up the illusion that they live in the world of 800 years ago. He regains his reason after some years but chooses to keep up his masquerade for he prefers to live in his own fantastic imagination rather than venture into the outside world of reality which has no longer any meaning for him. But obviously a decision to live the life of a madman cannot to normal minds appear anything else but madness itself and as the play unrolls we are left in doubt, the same sort of doubt that persists with regard to Hamlet, whether we have to do with feigned or real madness. And it is this very doubt which keeps the interest of the audience intense right up to the last act when the man who thinks himself the Emperor of Germany in the 11th century kills the man who was responsible for making him fall from his horse in the pageant and who was living with the woman whom he loved. At this final point in the play the doubt is heightened even though the dying victim shouts with his last breath that his murderer is sane.

The first act is not the best Pirandello. There is far too much explanation of the historical background. It is not really necessary to absorb these details in order to appreciate the play as I had to explain to an earnest young woman during the interval who felt that she needed clarification. But with the appearance of Henry IV at the end of this act the play moves with increasing excitement. As I have said this is a one-man play and Micheal MacLiammoir brought all his theatrical skill to bear upon it. It was a moving and memorable performance and will no doubt add to his reputation as an actor. I felt, however, that on one occasion, at least, he overacted. It was when he jumps on the table and terrorises the members of his retinue to whom he has just confessed that he is not mad. I am compelled to compare his performance with that of Lennox Robinson—a performance in which dramatic intensity was achieved by underplaying. Surely the key is in the text itself which Micheal MacLiammoir has himself translated into easy-flowing English. Henry IV is made to say to his friends who have come to cure him that he acts his madness quietly while they in their sanity exaggerate their emotions. Hilton Edwards has got together an efficient cast to support Micheal MacLiammoir and has shown once again that as a producer he can get every theatrical ounce out of a play.

We are slowly evolving a convention for the radio play and Radio Eireann is showing how this can be done. On the first night of a new play at the theatre, the playwright, in response to the call: "author, author", makes a seemingly reluctant appearance, takes his bow and with due humility thanks the audience for their reception and the actors for making that reception possible. On three successive Sundays, we had a play by Sean O'Casey. They were not new plays. On the contrary, they were performed for the first time some thirty years ago. We are familiar with them for they have been performed by the Abbey Theatre and by amateur companies innumerable times. What was new was that not only was the author asked to add his voice and personality to the production but also the revolutionary idea of having him speak at the beginning of the performance.

I did not hear Mr. O'Casey's first Sunday talk with which he prefixed *The Shadow of a Gunman* but I did hear him when he prefaced with stinging remarks the Radio Eireann production of *Juno and the Paycock*. What he said had nothing to do with either the merits of this play or its performance. It was no humble mumbled apology for the dramatic fare to follow. It was the very opposite.

This must be the first occasion since Bernard Shaw satirised the critics in *Fanny's First Play* that drama critics came in for such a trouncing as O'Casey gave them that Sunday night. Shaw put his critics on the stage but O'Casey put them on the mat. Shaw treated them as a class but O'Casey divided them into Irish critics and the rest. And it was against the former, for their alleged inability to appreciate his last play: *The Bishop's Bonfire*, that he directed his rousing rhetoric. They were, he said, a solid shouting band of undertakers trying to bury him but they wouldn't keep *him* down among the dead men. He was indifferent to their incantation of derision (How excitingly like his own dialogue O'Casey talk can be!). It was disturbing to hear a great dramatist lose his sense of proportion to the extent of believing that Irish critics ("a blend of old lace and arsenic" is how he described them) were banded against him in their rejection of his latest work. If this were indeed so then they must be counted as abject failures. Surely the fact that the Gaiety Theatre was packed for five weeks during the performance of *The Bishop's Bonfire* is evidence enough that the Irish public appreciated the play even if some critics (foolishly, I think) thought it should be like his early plays. The latter play has now been published by Messrs. MacMillan (Price 8s. 6d.) and reading should clear up many misconceptions.

The Radio Eireann players gave us a taste of the primitive O'Casey—not the man fighting his corner against imagined lack of recognition—but the early dramatist striking with his *Juno and the Paycock* a new and abiding note in the history of drama. Once more we heard, really heard, for there was no visual distraction, the natural dialogue tinged with the O'Casey colour, whilst the drama got an added poignancy (sometimes too much so) through our dependence on the ear alone.

John Stephenson's adaptation took few liberties with the script and all the actors gave thoughtful and impressive renderings. I liked Arthur O'Sullivan's parasitical Joxer which like the other parts were in the Abbey tradition as well as John Stephenson's deliberate Capt. Boyle.

I feel I must complain about the Radio Eireann practice of giving the names of the cast, only at the end of the play. They should be mentioned at the beginning also so that the listener can associate the actor with the part. Had I not recognised the voice of Florence Lynch in the part of Mrs. Madigan I would not now be able to pay tribute to an actress who does not cease to improve.

The Pike Theatre Club ventured into the well chartered period of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood with T. B. Morris's play *We Dig for the Stars*. This must be the first attempt to make drama out of the group to whom the credit must go for having struck the first blow against the whale-boned respectability of the Victorians in the middle of the last century. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (played by Fergus Cogley with a sincerity that just managed to counterbalance the essential

theatricality of the part) is of course the central figure. Much is made of the gothic ghouliness of the digging up of his wife's grave to recover the poems which he had in impulsive sacrifice buried with her. It was amusing to see Algernon Swinburne comically portrayed but Max Beerböhme got much better results by means of his incomparable (the adjective is inseparable from Max) caricature. Peter Murray could have been better in this part. Carolyn Swift, as Christina Rossetti, looked and acted the part of Gabriel's sister but the palm must go to Cathleen Delaney, who has not been on the stage for some time, for her interpretation of the difficult role of Fanny Cornforth, the lady who, by the very laxity of her morals, ruled the Rossetti household. The author has made up his period with great thoroughness but somehow there was not enough drama to make it worth while. Nevertheless, the whole provided an entertaining and literary instructive evening and the Pike Theatre must be congratulated for making it possible.

If anyone suspects *Airs on a Shoestring*, for all its description as an intimate revue, to be full of esoteric references to British social and political life, he had better remove the dark thought from his mind. Laurier Lister is credited with having devised the production and he has done so with the skill of a diplomat, deferring as he does to the taste of the tired typist, the blasé man of letters, in addition to all those who can spare enough from their pay packet for relaxation in the theatre after the day's toil.

Nothing on the stage is more amusing than seeing heroes humbled, modern composers gayed, arty suburbanites ridiculed, film studios burlesqued, sponsored television comically anticipated. This is what is offered to us on a gay plate by means of droll sketches nicely timed against colourful backgrounds and with the kind of acting for which the music-hall has prepared us and which is so different from that of the so-called legitimate stage.

But we got much more. It was worth while paying a visit to the Olympia if only to see Moyra Fraser dance. It is rare to see such a combination of grace and comedy. She has a laugh in her loose limbering fingers, a shiver of delight in the sudden fall of her hair and a shriek of merriment in the unexpected transformation of an elegant pose into the bathos of one leg scratching the other. She is an accomplished comedienne as well as a delightful dancer and appears in many skits but Miss Fraser will remain unforgettable, for me at any rate, in her mime of a bather taking her first hesitant sea plunge of the season.

Max Adrian held the audience in his one-man evocation of a scene in an English club with its aged members drowning traditionally in deep arm-chairs. This must be believed when seen. Max Adrian is versatile and sings folk songs with a convincing soft voice as well as a ditty about a reluctant Sherpa on a Mount Everest expedition.

There are ensemble dances which have colour, swirling skirts and *élan* and many, many more sketches which have something or other to recommend them. I hated the overture on pianos which seemed to require tuning—a cacophony exaggerated by the accompanying drums. But the drop cloth designed by Joan Burton was a delight.

THE DUBLIN PAINTERS' ANNUAL EXHIBITION.

EXHIBITION OF SCULPTURE. The Municipal Gallery.

PAINTINGS BY KENNETH MAHOOD. The Victor Waddington Galleries.

RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION (1939-1954) BY COLIN MIDDLETON. The Victor Waddington Galleries.

The Dublin Painters' is, as usual, predominantly academic in flavour; even its very mild *fauves* appear to have been rendered harmless by domestication. This year's show is dominated by Patrick Hennessy's *Charts and Sextant* whose astonishing *trompe l'oeil* compels admiration by the sheer exactitude of its reproduction of a complexity of forms and textures. But the problems solved are, strictly speaking, not the fundamental problems of art at all. In fact here the true artistic process is inverted and a controlled craftsmanship asserts the paramount importance of the object, and by implication of itself. There is no transformation. Neither imagination nor feeling are allowed to interfere. On the level of art, one might as well compare a Yeats' lyric with a dictionary, as compare such painting, however talented, with the humblest Courbet still-life, or a Picasso painted in an afternoon.

Robertson Craig's *Portrait in Yellow and Black*, though still fashionably well-mannered, has more feeling and freedom in its painting than any of his portraits at the Academy. Both it and *The Painter—Reginald Grey* have something of the stuffy warmth and clubland intimacy one associates with English painting of the Edwardian period.

James W. James' *Mrs. R. Corballis*, as honest, straightforward portraiture, unaffected by any but strictly academic problems is, I think, one of his best pieces of work. His paint has freshness and spontaneity and the effect is concentrated in spite of his naturalistic treatment. In addition to the above I liked Pamela Matthew's coolly coloured and delicate *Near Torremolinos, Spain* with its formally interesting patterns in the foreground; John Ryan's *Head of a Girl*, simply conceived and painted with economy; and Henry Healy's well-composed *Winetavern St. Bridge*.

The third annual exhibition of sculpture organised by the Institute of the Sculptors of Ireland contains a high proportion of interesting work. The show is more carefully selected than in previous years and features prominently the work of younger sculptors in a variety of contemporary idioms, from the purely abstract, to the neo-primitive, with in between some lively essays in expressionism. Oisín Kelly is himself a master of several quite distinctive idioms, so that the temptation to upbraid him for diffusing his undoubted talents may be due to the thwarted critic's frustration when baulked in his search for the convenient label.



His *Horse and Jockey* is an exciting *tour de force* in its translation of violent movement into most expressive and economical form. On the other hand his naturalistic *Study from Life* has a curious rightness and dignity in its unsentimentalised and formally selective treatment. In still another vein the primitive simplicity of his *Adam and Eve* is very effective. I noted some good work in this idiom by Ian and Imogen Stuart and I very much liked the element of satire in Ian Frier's beautifully carved *Oh My Papa*.

To judge from *Pina*, a freely and subtly modelled portrait bust, the work of the Belfast sculptor Edmondo Gigante is outstanding in its promise. I shall look forward to a one-man show of his work. I find it difficult to decide which I dislike the more: the empty rhetoric of Frederick Herkner's *Moonlight*, formally obtuse in its attempt to convey an abstract idea that has nothing to do with sculpture; or the uninspired and almost clinical realism of his *Standing Figure*. Nor can I derive any pleasure from the type of public pronouncement implicit in Peter Grant's *Manannan*.

Seamus Murphy's *Tablet* is a wonderful example of the dignity and effectiveness of fine letter-cutting. The lettering, in slender Roman, cut in slate, is astonishingly elegant. The sculptor tells me that letter-cutting reached a high level of excellence in the Blackwater valley in the 18th century, evident in the well-cut inscriptions on tombstones in that area. To-day, unfortunately, it is a dead art, though Seamus Murphy's example may do something to revive it. Certainly this tablet, and his work on the tombstone to Sir Arnold Bax at St. Finbarr's cemetery, Cork, should prove an effective influence.

I had admired pictures by Kenneth Mahood at group exhibitions during the past two years. This, his first one-man exhibition shows a high level of achievement for so young a painter. His work is consistently abstract and each work sets and solves an individual problem of pictorial architecture. His abstraction is objective; it derives from observation and formal analysis. He is at his best when the formal elements are already inherent in the subject, as in *Harbour Group* or *Two Boats*; or in *White Farmhouse* where finely balanced construction and measured painting achieve an almost classical beauty. Most of the thirty-two works are eminently successful and astonishingly mature for the work of so young a painter. With an occasional picture like *Village with Trees* I feel that his idiom is not yet capable of compassing the organic or informal. The academic critic who feels that abstraction is merely an evasion of the labours of realism, and not, as it is, a very exacting discipline may be referred to Mahood's very fine work as an illustrator with a robust sense of humour and a vigorous line.

Colin Middleton's retrospective exhibition outlines his development as a painter, from the smoothly painted and imaginative fantasies of his early work, seen here in *Magdalene* (1939) or *The Coming of St. George* (1942), to the vigour and passionate humanity of his later work. Apart from the brilliance of his paint, he has one rare quality in his inexhaustible capacity for wonder. His work, particularly in such fantasies as *Echo out of Palmos* (1949) or *Music*, infect the spectator with something of the painter's enthusiasm. His recent work confirms my belief that he is one of our foremost painters.

## BOOK REVIEWS

THE PROUSTIAN VISION. By Milton Hindus. Columbia University Press.  
London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 32s.

*The Proustian Vision* considers the relationship between Proust's life and his work in so far as it supports the argument that *A la recherche du temps perdu* represents, in one sense, an escape, through the medium of the narrator, from "the most painful psychological realities": homosexuality, the Jewish strain, a divided maternal love. As an examination, however, of the different aspects of the novel, crediting this imaginative world with the greatest moral values, it may astonish those readers who, unlike Mr. Hindus, do not ignore the sadism in Proust's character, and are less impressed by his plea: "We cannot draw near to the most abandoned creatures without recognizing in them the images of men. And the sympathy we feel for their humanity compels our tolerance of their perversity." To convince us of the beauty and maturity of such an appeal Mr. Hindus would have needed to show in Proust an equal concern for chastity.

His zeal to defend Proust from "socialist critics or from socially conscious ones" goes to curious lengths. That disordered nerves and morbidity were behind, and also the price of, a masterpiece is not denied by any perceptive reader—the novel indeed underlines Proust's confession that 'health and sanity' were in conflict with 'spiritual pleasures'—but Mr. Hindus seems to regard the critic who does not immediately agree that art is more precious than life, that the subject matter has no ultimate significance, as shockingly healthy and sane, or, in other words, obtuse and unspiritual. There is this qualification, though: "Beginning from an extremity of disease and dislocation, he gradually found his way back to a classic conception and definition of moral health, and that is more than his own age or the age following his has done."

The analysis of Proust's aesthetics, philosophy, psychology and sociology is brilliant; and the ardent and unremitting attention to all the writings (including the newly discovered *Jean Santeuil*), the emphasis on the influence of Wagner and Schopenhauer and the analogies between Proust and Freud, the discussion of style and structure, the sensitive interpretation, make the book a notable contribution to Proustian studies. But the large claims for his ethics are a little confused due to Mr. Hindus's inordinate determination to have the best of two worlds. It is admitted that Proust was a misogynist, that for him "goodness, in all but a very few men, is a superficial camouflage which soon wears thin and shows the baser motives underneath," that he "did not permanently turn aside from the unpalatable truth, which grew more strongly upon him all the time, about the overwhelming evidence of the inherent brutality and depravity of mankind"; yet it is later affirmed: "No writer has so consistently held justice, charity, and benevolence up for our admiration. Or denigrated cruelty and insensibility." We are told:

"To Proust, there seems no real possibility for the development of all the potentialities of love which shall illustrate his laws, where there is an absence of money, position, or other advantages. In the latter case, the affair is doomed even before its growth, for an adequate soil and means of nourishment are lacking for it. Where there is no leisure, there may

be a simulacrum of romantic love, there must be simple sex, but not love in the involved, fully developed Proustian sense. Love is a luxury, and sex only a necessity ; consequently, while everyone can enjoy the latter, few can afford the former."

but also : " It is only a man who is capable, at least at moments, of flashes of the greatest moral insight, who could write, as Proust has, that compassion for suffering is a stronger cause of love than the desire for pleasure." One would have said, rather, that if his conception of love as an elegant torment for the rich, and jealousy as its inseparable shadow, is responsible for the subtle patterns of his novel, the self-centredness and self-pity of his characters betray the cork-lined room. His pessimism encouraged metaphysical speculations—though they did not take him far—but to insist on the lofty moral heights of his work is to deprive morality of its meaning.

To M. Mauriac's objection : " the lack of moral perspective impoverishes the humanity created by Proust, narrows its universe". Mr. Hindus retorts : " I do not see in Proust the evidence of that decadence and amorality which many of his critics have found in him. He was too busy emphasizing the best qualities which he discovered in the world around him to be charged with responsibility for corrupting it." There can scarcely be a more fervent advocate than Mr. Hindus, but a writer who believes as little as Proust did in human virtue will hardly persuade us that it is worth attainment. L.H.

THE BOOK OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT. By A Friend of God. A Guide to Rhineland Mysticism. Edited, Translated and with an Introduction by C. F. Kelley. Longmans. 21s.

The fourteenth-century Rhineland school of mysticism is of particular interest to students. In a period of great unrest, and while many of the clergy were engaged in political as well as religious conflict, the Friends of God, generally orthodox in their theology yet fervent mystics, sought to promote the life of the spirit in the religious communities filled with those who sought refuge from the world, whether from contempt, despair or fear. There were inevitably among them men and women whose ideas and practices are distasteful to us ; but there were also such great figures as Eckhart, Tauler and Suso, whose teachings have profoundly affected later generations.

*The Book of the Poor in Spirit*, for long attributed to Tauler but now more cautiously claimed to be the work of a mid-fourteenth-century Dominican in close contact with him, is regarded as one of the period's finest contributions to mystical literature. Dr. Kelley, in the introduction to his excellent translation, notes the limitations of the work from a modern viewpoint—limitations that belong to its time and traditions. Renunciation, for example, seems to us an easier path than the attempt to transform human activities ; but the Christian cannot now as lightly disown his neighbour or shake off the claims of a gravely threatened world. Yet the spiritual insight of the book is remarkable, and it shares with other works of the School a vision and a quest that Dr. Kelley well describes.

" To study the Rhineland school of mystical theology is to study a most instructive part not only of Christian but of universal religious experience.



It would be impossible for one to read their writings, any more than those of the later English, Spanish or French mystics, without realizing that their way of detachment and their profound speculations plumb the universal depths of theology and metaphysics. They are distinctly Christian, but they are also connected with those traditional doctrines which have prompted the truly great of every race which has left behind it more than elaborate graveyards. In the Sufi, the Greek, the Buddhist and Hindu, one will discover the same craving after the eternal Spirit, the same attempt to put into words that experience of union between the soul and the Absolute."

FORTITUDE AND TEMPERANCE. By Josef Pieper. Translated by Daniel F. Coogan. Faber and Faber. 10s. 6d.

In his study of the cardinal virtues, Prudence and Fortitude, Dr. Pieper, the distinguished German philosopher, restores to them their scholastic meaning and considers their significance at different levels—the pre-moral, the ethical and the mystical—and the necessary part they have in the Christian pattern of life. In so far as his book does this, it is profound, sensitive and illuminating; but the non-Roman Catholic reader will observe regretfully that, like many theologians and philosophers who accept the infallibility of St. Thomas Aquinas, Dr. Pieper is less than just to other systems of thought.

"It is true that all four cardinal virtues have been debased in the liberal's concept of man; but quite specifically it is the original significance of the virtues of fortitude and temperance which has eluded him. His secularized, bourgeois optimism made it impossible for the liberal to penetrate to the true basis of these two virtues. Their foundation in reality, without which neither fortitude nor temperance can be thought of significantly as virtues, is the metaphysical fact of the existence of evil: evil in the world of men, evil in the world of spirits; evil in the two-fold form of guilt and punishment; that is, the evil that we do, and the evil that we suffer. The things that prevent the enlightened liberal from knowing and above all acknowledging, this fundamental reality are his resolute worldliness together with his unbounded earthly optimism, and, as the product of these two, his middle-class metaphysics. Anxiously bent on security he 'desires to remain exempt from fortitude'."

One would have thought that the heroism and self-sacrifice of common men of every creed in the last war, in concentration camps and in resistance groups—to take one brief period only—would shame these glib arrangements of the virtues into Christian and lesser breeds. Those, however, who claim of the Roman Church, and despite the evidence of ecclesiastical history: "Christian truth is in its origin and primarily in the custody of the teaching office of the Church; the individual possesses it only when he lives in union with the Church and hearkens by faith to her teaching", take naturally the attitude of the Pharisee to the publican.

Dr. Pieper continues: "this excursus makes no claim whatever to originality of thought. Rather, it contains not a single sentence that could not be documented from the works of St. Thomas Aquinas . . ." but certain of his arguments would bear further elucidation. There is, for instance, a quotation from the commentary



by Aquinas on St. John's Gospel and the injunction 'resist not evil': "Thus to interpret the injunction of the Sermon on the Mount *literally* is to misunderstand it. This injunction signifies rather the readiness of the soul to bear, *if it be necessary*, such things and worse, without bitterness against the attacker . . ." If one reads Dr. Pieper correctly, the Church must decide this necessity—which leads the Protestant to enquire if all Christ's commands are to be accepted with similar reservations. Politic one might be, but perhaps less than a disciple.

GESTA STEPHANI. Translated from the Latin with Introduction and Notes by K. R. Potter.

THE HISTORIA NOVELLA. By William of Malmesbury. Translated from the Latin with Introduction and Notes by K. R. Potter. Nelson's Medieval Texts. Nelson. 20s. each.

The whole period of the 'anarchy' with the incessant struggles between the impulsive and well-meaning Stephen, the arrogant Matilda, the turbulent, opportunist barons and the politic bishops, the misery of the common people, the uncertain yet willing patronage of the arts and learning, is a difficult if fascinating chapter in history; and the old chroniclers deserve our admiration, so conscientious and lucid were their labours.

The monk, William of Malmesbury, delights us with his scrupulous, partisan though just, and always vivid narrative. Whether he is writing sadly of King Henry's last crossing to Normandy: "The elements accompanied with their sorrow the last crossing of so great a prince. For on that very day the sun, at the sixth hour, covered his shining head with gloomy rust, as the poets are wont to say, putting fear into men's minds by his eclipse, and on the following Friday at dawn the earth quaked so terribly that it seemed to sink to the depths, and a dreadful noise was heard under the earth before this. In the eclipse I saw myself the stars around the sun, and in the earthquake the wall of the house in which I sat lifted up by two shocks and settling down at a third," or reminding us that "I have always dreaded putting in writing, for transmission to posterity, anything that I did not know to be established as solid fact," we are conscious, as Mr. K. R. Potter comments, of the charm of his writing and personality. And it seems fitting that his unfinished and unrevised *Historia Novella* ends: "I should certainly be pleased to add the manner of the Empress's escape if I had sure knowledge of it, for it is a manifest miracle of God . . . I am, however, disposed to go into this more thoroughly if ever by the gift of God I learn the truth from those who were present."

The unknown author of the *Gesta Stephani* may be less attractive as a writer, but, as is emphasized, he also "gives an impression of good faith, and considering the violent opposition of the points of view it is remarkable, and creditable to both writers, that the *Gesta* and the *Historia Novella* are so seldom in serious disagreement on questions of fact." The particular interest of this edition is the incorporation of a manuscript—the lost ending of the *Gesta* recently discovered by Professor Mynors at Valenciennes—which supplies a fuller record of the last years of the Anarchy.

These latest additions to the Nelson Medieval Texts, edited and translated with exact scholarship, are invaluable to the student of medieval history.

L.H.

FRONTIERS OF A NATION. By H. F. Frischwasser-Ra'nanan. The Batchworth Press, London. Pp. xvi+168. 16s.

The scope of the author's study is indicated by the sub-title on the cover, namely: "A survey of diplomatic and political history relating to the Palestine Mandate". The story of the British Mandate for Palestine begins in the period preceding the First World War, when the Middle East became the contesting ground of the Great Powers for the securing of economic expansion and the safeguarding of imperialist military strategy. Britain controlled Egypt and the Suez Canal and her policy in that area was, naturally, to prevent the other Great Powers from encroaching upon her interests. The other Powers were anxious to win concessions from the Turkish Sultan for the construction and exclusive control of overland rail routes to link the East with the West, as an alternative to the Suez Canal. The conflict of interests is demonstrated continuously by the intrigues, the shifting of alliances and the attempts to forestall and outwit which marked the diplomacy of those colourful days. Into this picture came two other forces, the rise of Arab nationalism and Zionism, both of which became important factors in deciding the fate of Turkey's Middle Eastern Empire after the First World War.

In the early manoeuvring for a foothold in the Middle East, France had assumed responsibility for the protection and wellbeing of the Catholic communities in Syria and Palestine, while Britain took the Druze and Jewish minorities there under its care. Thus began an association between Britain and the Jews which found its fuller political expression in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, when Britain formally recognised the rights of the Jews to a National Home in Palestine.

Following the Allied victory in 1918, Germany and Russia were eliminated from the scramble for spheres of influence in the Middle East, while the collapse of the Turkish Empire held out the promise for the realisation of the aims of both the Arab Nationalists and the Zionists. France had, indeed, vested interests in Palestine and had hoped to secure some measure of control but Britain, by refusing in advance to have an Anglo-French army in that area, conquered the country with its own forces and thus remained in exclusive military control. Later British authority assumed the form of a Mandate for Palestine which was granted by the League of Nations and to which Britain was responsible for the administration of the country. When the British abandoned the Mandate in 1948 and left the Jewish and Arab populations to settle their rival claims by the force of arms, the State of Israel was born.

In reading this book one is led through a maze of complexities which is perplexing, particularly in the years immediately following the conquest of Palestine. The Arabs and the Jews come to an understanding through their representatives, the Emir Feisal and Dr. Weizmann. France insists upon her right to a sphere of influence in the Middle East, resulting in interminable negotiations with the British and involving also both Arabs and Jews. The British sponsor Feisal as king of Syria, but he is deposed by France, whose troops occupy that country. The Emir Abdallah marches on Transjordan and occupies it with the acquiescence of the British, so that Palestine is partitioned. The early friendship between Arabs and Jews is shortlived and the rift widens. All these events, and a host of others, crowd into the picture, as one attempts to

understand the factors which ultimately divided the Middle East into its present territorial units.

The facts are presented in chronological order, are interpreted and integrated into the changing pattern of political movements. A number of maps is supplied to illustrate the fluctuating situations, beginning with the plans for an economic partition of the Middle East before 1918 till the final demarcation of frontiers. The story of Palestine can be understood only in the light of the complicated background of the historical movements of the past half century. This task the author has fulfilled with admirable competence.

J. WEINGREEN.

ENTER THESE ENCHANTED WOODS. An Interpretation of Grimm's Fairy Tales.

By Arland Ussher and Carl von Metzradt. Sandymount Press. 6/-.

The telling of a fairy tale is for the child a rite: no change is allowed in detail or gesture, in word or sequence, or the magic is undone. It is his first initiation into the beauty and terror of myths though it is only in the adult world, if then, that he will ponder these symbols of what Dr. Jung has called 'the polarity inherent in all life'. Yet even if the interpretative patterns of psychology prepare us for the unmasking of goose-girls and sleeping princesses, fools and witches, it may still seem far-fetched to see, for example, in *Hansel and Gretel* any account of the *animus* and the *anima*. In *Enter These Enchanted Woods*, however, Mr. Arland Ussher and Herr Carl von Metzradt have taken the haunting images and singular adventures of the Grimm tales—the severed horse's head that hangs, but not mutely, above a dark archway; the silent tableaux in a castle round which a great hedge presses; the crystal casket for a dead princess, undimmed by the light breath of the hovering dwarfs; the transformations into shapes of bird or beast—and shown their "correspondence with the *inside* of reality".

Here the fairy tales resemble those Chinese signs which represent physical objects, attributes, principles, and indicate profound truths. The enchanted woods that the child discovers, and whose grotesque or radiant creatures trouble later dreams, are explained with the aid of psychology, philosophy and an esoteric lore. Cinderella looks into a mirror and sees the White Goddess.

*Enter These Enchanted Woods*—part of which has already appeared in *The Dublin Magazine*—is a notable investigation of the child's inheritance of psychic experience, and a book that even the reader with only the faintest recollections of Rumpelstilzkin and Snow-White and Rose-Red will find of unusual interest.

LUNACY, LAW AND CONSCIENCE, 1744-1845. By Kathleen Jones, Ph.D. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited. 21s. net.

There is a regular spate of books on Lunacy, Psychiatry, and Criminology and this is a valuable addition to the list. The changes which have taken place in the care and cure of mental disorders are revolutionary. No longer is a mental patient branded with a stigma, he has an illness which will be diagnosed and treated in a mental hospital. No longer will a "lunatic" be an inmate of an "asylum"; these terms must be forgotten. The work under review deals with the first stage of the revolution 1744-1845 and is primarily an administrative study; at this period additional reforms such as the penal and factory laws, new developments in education and health were taking place. How England has grown! It is difficult to



realise that in the early eighteenth century the population was only about five and a half million. Medical qualifications were unstandardised and a Master of Arts of Oxford or Cambridge could acquire an M.D. degree by expounding a book of Galen in three written papers or six spoken lectures. Insanity was, until 1800, ineffective as a defence against a criminal charge and the McNaughton Rules which later came into being were a marked improvement, even though their efficiency is being questioned to-day. The appalling pictures of Bethlem and other "lunatic asylums" of those days when imprisonment, torture and starvation were the treatments must be compared with the institutions of to-day when gentleness, attendance at film shows and concerts, encouragement to paint, combined with such modern methods as shock treatments are the vogue. Even in 1789 a King was barbarously treated. Authors and painters like Dickens and Hogarth helped with propaganda for improvement, at the same time as writers such as Cooper, Christopher Smart, Oliver Goldsmith, Robert Burns, Blake and Charles Lamb were, if not certifiably insane, the subjects of attacks of depression akin to insanity. The publication of some sinister cases, especially those where patients were incarcerated when essentially sane brought about marked reforms and Ashley who became the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury was an ardent advocate for the insane; in 1842 he was 41 and had been an M.P. for 16 years and a lunacy commissioner for 14 years; he persisted successfully in his endeavours until he was 85.

The Act of 1942 which was passed to empower the Commissioners to carry out an inspection of all asylums in the country was one of the most important steps towards ameliorating the lot of the mentally ill.

Dr. Kathleen Jones has done her work well. The Bibliography will be useful to research scholars and the Index is satisfactory.

B.S.

**HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE WESTERN CHRISTIAN TRADITION.** By D. S. Bailey, Ph.D. London: Longmans, Green and Co. 15s. net.

Homosexuality which seems to have been predominant since the earliest days is becoming far too fashionable, especially in the artistic world. The Rev. Dr. Bailey provides a scholarly examination of its historical and religious concepts. He does not discuss the theological and moral aspects. In view of the present enquiry regarding legislation it is important that those who are concerned with the administration of the law should understand how the Western attitude to homosexual practices originated and developed. Bailey demonstrates that the fallacy that sodomy was the sin for which Sodom was destroyed is explained by an incorrect interpretation of the word "yadha" which means "know" and that "know" means "coitus". The suggestion is made that Sodom was destroyed by an earthquake as a divine punishment for the general wickedness of the city. The pity of homosexuality nowadays is that if two men or women are honestly friendly and good companions they are immediately branded as homosexuals; in Bible days the relationship of David and Jonathan has been questioned, whereas David proved himself to be faithful to Michal his wife under very difficult circumstances. Have we anything to suggest? Investigation should be on the lines of psychiatry or penology. Castration was often the punishment in olden times; we believe, if a



man uses his position to seduce a boy, we should be glad to know that this punishment was inflicted.

There is an enormous amount of research in this scholarly book; it is not for the ordinary public but it should be read by investigators and it will be of interest to churchmen and psychiatrists. References are voluminous and the Index is satisfactory. B.S.

INTRODUCTORY PAPERS ON DANTE. By Dorothy L. Sayers. London, Methuen, 1954. Pp. xx + 225. 21s.

This volume is an attempt to remove some of the obstacles that are likely to discourage the reader who, although he is not a professional scholar, yet wishes to read and understand Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It consists of papers on the following subjects: Dante's Imagery: I—Symbolic, II—Pictorial; The Meaning of Heaven and Hell; The Meaning of Purgatory; The Fourfold Interpretation of the *Comedy*; The City of Dis; The Comedy of the *Comedy*; The Paradoxes of the *Comedy*.

I believe that the prospective reader of Dante will find useful material in Miss Sayers's book: she takes pains to explain various theological points and she writes helpfully of Dante's use of allegory and symbol. (When I say that I do not mean, of course, that I necessarily agree with her in all her interpretations.) But I think, too, that the book has weaknesses, and that these are to be found in Dr. Sayers's methods of exposition and in her own appreciation of Dante's writing.

A non-specialist is not necessarily a child. And it seems to me that if a reader is serious enough to start reading a book entitled *Introductory Papers on Dante* he is likely to be offended by some of the treatment he gets from Miss Sayers. He may feel peeved, for example, on finding that, after quoting a beautifully lucid passage from St. Thomas Aquinas on the nature of sin, she proceeds to explain and illustrate it at length, requesting the reader to assume, for the purpose, that he has broken a very dear friend's teapot.....Or he may feel that he is well able to grasp the fact that it is difficult to enter into the consciousness of Dante, or indeed of any other being, without the analogy of the cat and the dog:

"But what it really feels like to be a cat: how the world really looks to a dog: and above all, what the values of the animal creation are, these are enigmas, and the more earnestly we gaze into those strange furry faces—so familiar, so uninhibited and open, and yet so curiously secretive, the more....."

And so on. And again and again.

As for Miss Sayers's enjoyment and appreciation of the poem it is instructive to compare her treatment of two episodes. The first is that in which Dante, who has not realized that one of the P's representing the Seven Deadly Sins has disappeared from his forehead, is made aware of the fact that something has happened by the attitudes of the passers-by. He then confirms it by touching his brow. Miss Sayers comments:

"Whereat," says Dante, "my Leader smiled." To be sure he did—and so do we, pursued by embarrassing recollections of paper caps playfully assumed and forgotten, honeymoon rice tumbling out of silk toppers, tram tickets parked in a hat-band and unwittingly worn to a funeral, twigs, straws, or the unwelcome attentions of pigeons—some-

thing on one's head which one doesn't know about *until*—Dear, funny Dante—and at such a solemn moment too!

It will be seen that Miss Sayers derives pleasure from supplementing what Dante has written by drawing on her own well-stored memory. So far so good. But it is *not* good when she goes a step farther and begins to attribute her own additions to Dante, or to assume that he meant them, and then writes approvingly of him for doing so—as she does in this second passage:

"We smile again when, in Paradise, he asks a foolish question and Beatrice, 'after a sigh of pity' turns her eyes towards him 'with that look a mother casts on her delirious child.' We know that not only does Dante know his own absurdity but that he also knows (a rare thing in the male) exactly how absurd all men appear in the eyes of the women who are fond of them—admirable, adorable, maybe, but always delirious children."

There is nothing in the text to show that Dante "knows" anything of the kind.

But I do not wish to dwell on the faults. If the reader is prepared to persevere with the book in spite of them and in spite of its silly jibes against those who do not share in the author's theology, he will find pleasure and utility in it—and not a little unconscious humour.

T.G.G.

THE CHURCH FACES THE CHALLENGE. The Report of the Church of Scotland Commission on Communism. Longmans. 4s. 6d.

A DOCTOR'S FAITH HOLDS FAST. By Christopher Woodard. Max Parrish. 12s. 6d.

The special Commission appointed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland "to examine the influence on our social life of secular movements and philosophies and especially of materialistic Communism: to stimulate and co-ordinate, in conjunction with other Churches and Christian bodies, efforts to relate the Christian Faith to the concerns of common life: to provide the Church of Scotland with information on these matters: and to promote Christian action by its members, congregations and Church courts", has issued four reports. The present one is sociological in content, dealing with problems of freedom and personality in the modern world, of race, food, population and poverty. So often the Churches have been satisfied to condemn Communism and secular liberalism in bitter and sweeping terms or to offer pious generalizations that ignore urgent realities. One welcomes, therefore, this candid admission of the defects of Christian society, and rigorous investigation, based on thorough sociological and political knowledge, of possible remedies. Its maturity of thought and bold proposals make *The Church Faces the Challenge* a stimulating and invaluable study.

*A Doctor's Faith Holds Fast* is a sequel to *A Doctor Heals by Faith*. Dr. Woodard, who is a Harley Street specialist, writes simply of what he has profoundly experienced—the power and reality of spiritual healing—and describes several remarkable cures of which he has been the instrument. His belief that Christ's commands to his disciples are still literally enjoined on the Church and on every Christian, his insistence on the way of life, the self-discipline and the quality of faith that bring healing to body and soul, are impressive in their quiet sincerity and humility. This is a book that will bring comfort and hope to the sick and to those bewildered by the problem of suffering.

THE EMPRESS FREDERICK WRITES TO SOPHIE. Edited by Arthur Gould Lee.  
Faber and Faber. 25s.

I found this book absorbing. Certain reviewers have been content to reiterate the legend of a soured, disappointed woman, unable to forget for an instant her liberal husband's unpopularity in certain circles in Germany, or the fact that he was a dying man when he came to the throne and reigned for less than ninety days. They have headlined her differences with her son, the last Kaiser, for which he was almost wholly to blame, under the influence of Bismarck and his grandparents. And they have professed themselves deeply distressed and nauseated by this spectacle of a royal widow, unable to forget her grievances, and pouring them out to her daughter in Greece.

I can only reply that they cannot have read the letters very carefully ; or that their reading must have been rigidly selective. Here, besides the occasional grumbler—whose verdicts nevertheless are always scrupulously fair and have been endorsed by subsequent history up to the very hilt—is a highly-intelligent, warm-hearted woman, steeped in family affection, yet continually revealing a keen interest in art, in contemporary politics, and in the human scene. Her ideals are as high as those of her father, the Prince Consort ; and her comments are as shrewd as those of her indomitable mother. She was defeated, thwarted, humiliated in small ways : and her naturally managing disposition, so far from having an outlet, had to be continually curbed. But how lovable she is in spite of her grievances and in spite of her managerial taint. Her grand-daughter, who was only five when she died, can write of her as “ a wonderful tradition and inspiration in our family ” and can speak of the qualities which made her “ a great and good woman ”. These letters endorse that verdict. You can see her fighting hard against the tendency to maternal bossiness, in her dealings with her beloved young daughter, married to the future King Constantine. The older children had been prejudiced against her, and went their own way, criticising her to her face—as she assuredly did them—but never to the point of breaking family ties. Everything she says about her daughter Charlotte is fully borne out in the memoirs of Queen Marie of Rumania. But her younger daughters adored her and these letters show that they were never for a moment absent from her thoughts. And despite their earlier differences, and the crystal clarity with which she saw all his errors and follies (indiscreet speeches, acts of petty tyranny, as when he forbade his sister Sophie, Crown Princess of Greece, to enter Germany for three years because she had changed her faith from the Protestant to the Greek Orthodox Church, or, even more absurdly, confined two ducal cousins to their own house for a whole fortnight, with guards to watch them, because the husband had not immediately informed him that his wife had fallen through the ice skating and been nearly drowned !), Wilhelm II drew nearer to the mother as time went on, was capable of paying her delicate attentions and could show the keenest interest in the house which she was building.

It was of him that she wrote to Sophie at the time of the religious rumpus—

There is no sentiment in his nature, so I fear he will not answer your letter lovingly and sensibly as he should. He is besides not *learned* enough to understand that our Christian Religion has centuries ago divided into branches of which each one naturally considers itself the true one, the purest and the best. In *each* we may do God's will, we may

do God's will, we may follow our Saviour's example, we may find strength in difficulties, comfort in sorrow and light to guide us aright. To which of these branches we feel most drawn, and which forms of faith appeal to us, is a matter of our conscience and our individuality. One way is as good as the other. *ALL* human Doctrines are imperfect, each has its advantages and disadvantages. But in the whole of Christ's teaching breathes *his spirit* of tolerance for the beliefs and the creeds of others.

She could be as much to the point when it came to discussing a water supply for Athens or the steps to be taken in the case of a possible outbreak of cholera. Her views on education were far in advance of those of most parents of her day. Her grandson, George, was not to be teased if he showed nervousness on his pony.

Nerves are a thing over which one has no control. So many children are dreadfully frightened, but if one is gentle and patient with them it is quite got over in a little time . . . I always think we grown-up people ought to be so careful how we exact obedience from our children. Obedience that is not cheerful or willing only ruins the character. All that nonsense of 'breaking the will' is now recognized as making children vicious and false and sly. Training a child's will so that it may trust willingly to the guidance of its elders, and *believe* in their protection, has obtained far happier results . . .

I have seen Friedrichshof, the home from which so many of these letters were written, and only a few months ago Prince Philip of Hesse, who is her grandson, showed me some of the antiques and art treasures which she had collected there, and which prove her to have been a connoisseur of very considerable taste. Her daughter, incidentally, seems to have been rather scornful on the subject of her love for 'musty old things'. This whole book is strung on the thread of family relationships; and the group taken at the Coburg wedding in 1894 will give an idea of how far-reaching those ramifications were. In my *Western Germany*, which has just been published, another group, taken on the same occasion, will be found, which I think does more justice to most of the sitters. I discovered it in Baden-Baden amongst some photographic plates, and there has probably never been such a concentration of persons of historical interest, before or since, in one single photograph.

I do not pretend that the Empress was without faults. She continually refers to them herself. There are touches of self-pity, some tactlessness, but also a great deal of tact in this correspondence. It was a period when tears seem to have risen to the eyes on the smallest excuse. And convention was stricter. The Empress despatches a London-trained midwife to Athens with her daughter under the guise of 'housekeeper'. She writes later, when there is reason to think she may be needed, "of course I could not tell you what her real profession was when you were a young girl, so I had to invent the name and function of housekeeper, so that you might have her always at hand—accidents happen very easily." But even here I am loth to criticise. The elderly Court *accoucheur* was late and the so-called housekeeper probably saved Sophie's life. Once again the Empress had been right.

MONK GIBBON.



THE PEN IN EXILE. An Anthology of Exiled Writers. Edited by Paul Tabori. Published by the International P.E.N. Club Centre for Writers in Exile. 12s. 6d.

It will astonish many readers of this distinguished anthology that no British or American publisher would consider its publication. As its editor, Dr. Paul Tabori, states: "This is, by any standards, a unique book. Between its covers there are stories, poems and essays by writers of fourteen nationalities—a miniature United Nations where political differences and national controversies have been forgotten in the common cause . . . I am fully aware that exiled writers cannot claim any indulgence just because they are exiles . . . Yet I feel that after finishing this volume a British or American reader will be more familiar with the problems, desires, struggles and dreams of not only the writers, but of their countries. He will understand why these writers claim with some justification to be ambassadors of the national cultures to the Free World. And it will be these writers who will carry back the ideas of the Free World to their own countries, once the totalitarian nightmare has ended."

One hopes that the efforts of its sponsors to make this anthology an Annual will meet with adequate response for the contributions have considerable literary merit. It would be unfair to single out particular items for the volume is admirably balanced; but it gives us an unusual opportunity, at a modest price, to appreciate something of the work and aims of several outstanding authors.

THE MOVING WATERS. By John Stewart Collis. Rupert Hart-Davis. 15s.

*The Moving Waters* is an account of "the waters from their ascent out of the ocean to their completion of the cycle", and of man's relation to them. In careful and singularly lucid detail Mr. Collis describes the work of the atmosphere and of rivers, the formation of avalanches, glaciers, snow-crystals, dew, and much else. We are reminded that "in the calendar of Nature the mountain indifferently shares the mortality of the moth and the worm" for Mr. Collis writes not only as a scientist, but also as a poet and philosopher.

"These leviathans (the icebergs) of the sea do not belong to the sea, they have crawled forth from the land, they have come down from the sky. Yet they do belong. They do belong, and have come at last to their own rightful home again. They started here; they rose on high; they fell; they flowed; and now are back once more. Drastic symbol of all our fleeting earthly shapes: today visible, tomorrow invisible; today a liquid, tomorrow a gas; today a solid soaring vessel riding on the waves, tomorrow as the flying vapour."

This is an enthralling book: its celebration of Nature, exact, felicitous, memorable; its information remarkable enough to excite the wonder of the dulllest imagination.

WESTERN GERMANY. By Monk Gibbon. Batsford. 18s.

As preface to *Western Germany*, Dr. Gibbon quotes Montaigne's complaint that he had with him no cook to learn about German food, and no valet or gentleman—"for I found it an amazing nuisance to live at the mercy of some blockhead of a guide; and, finally that I had not read, before I left home, such books as would have told the best things to be seen . . ." In Nazi Germany the visitor of modest appetite was generally too overwhelmed by the profusion of

food (a form of propaganda that deprived many German households of ordinary comfort) to fear that he would forget its preparation; and too distressed by the furtive, desperate importunities in museums and galleries to desire elegant protection from such reminders of a forcibly concealed poverty. Dr. Gibbon's light dismissals suggest that he has found a happier situation—"as for the guides I have a firm but effective way of dealing with them, telling them always very coldly, 'I wish to look, not to listen'."

His handsomely illustrated book is designed "to help in some measure to spare a modern traveller the third of Montaigne's regrets"; and in the area covered, from the Baltic to Lake Constance, he instructs the reader with almost formidable care, and describes the splendour that rewards such a journey. *Western Germany* offers neither the enchantment of Sitwellian style or subtle taste nor the gaiety and immediacy of, for example, the Gordans' bohemian experiences; but of Cologne, Bonn, Heidelberg, Bayreuth and Munich—to mention a few of the places visited—he writes as an author familiar with the country's architecture, art and history. Research, appreciation, and an alert concern for the intelligent but uninformed tourist mark every page; and what modestly sets out to be a painstaking guide-book, confessing its omissions, will also give considerable pleasure as a lively and persuasive piece of writing.

THE WREN. By Edward A. Armstrong. Collins. 30s.

It is now fifteen years since the publication of Mr. Armstrong's charming medley, *Birds of the Grey Wind*, which, in 1942, was awarded the John Burroughs Bronze Medal in the United States for the best piece of nature writing that had appeared within the previous three years. In it bird-life in County Antrim and in the author's native County Down was described with delightful blendings of poetry, old and new, and Irish legends and folk-lore. Early in the book Mr. Armstrong had something to say about that active little bird, the wren, mentioning that the ancient Irish custom of chasing it is one of the most interesting folk-lore survivals in the world.

In the present book, devoted entirely to the wren and its life-history, it is a bit disappointing to find nothing on the subject beyond mention that the wren is famous in folk-lore. However, it is gratifying to learn that Mr. Armstrong, who is a recognised authority in the ornithological world, and is also an authority on folk-lore, is engaged in the preparation of a book on the folk-lore of the birds of Britain and Ireland.

Outside Ireland the wren is shown as being distributed right round the Northern Hemisphere, and it will come as a surprise to some to be told that according to at least one authority, in origin the wren is an American bird. One of the smallest of our birds, the little wren of rufous brown plumage, with its short tail, so often perkily cocked, is well known. From the highest mountains to some of the most remote islands off our coast there are few places in Ireland where this hardy little bird cannot be seen or its loud and cheerful song heard throughout the year.

Though the wren will appropriate man-made niches in which to build its nests 'it goes on its own independent way and seldom seeks charity'. Even in severe weather it rarely shows any desire to accept hospitality at the bird-table. Mr. Armstrong admits that in selecting the wren for his intensive study he often

felt he could not have chosen a more difficult species, but confesses that it has never occurred to him that he could have chosen one more fascinating. Certainly he has succeeded in discovering everything worth knowing about this elusive little bird. Over thirty-five years ago another Irishman who was interested in birds, Mr. J. P. Burdett, contributed an excellent paper to the *Irish Naturalist* on some habits concerning "this queer little bird". Mr. Armstrong refers more than once to that paper but reference to it in his bibliography as *Irish Nat.* vol. 29, pp. 123-24, should be *Irish Nat.* vol. 28, pp. 85-9.

The wren's passion for nest building is widely known and Mr. Armstrong is able to confirm the nests are built by the male. Each male he tells us builds a number of nests sometimes as many as 8 or 10, but the average is 6. The female is then invited by her mate to inspect each nest in turn, and to quote Mr. Armstrong :

"The naturalist can scarcely hope for a more delightful experience than to behold the lovely courtship ritual when the wren with quivering wings, and uttering his sweetest songs, postures on a twig before the nest inviting the female to inspect it. The song is not different in kind from the courtship subsong, but is rather the most finished development of it."

The female alone decides on the nest to be used for egg-laying and the rearing of the brood, and it is she who brings feathers and downy material and lines the selected nest.

Many other interesting observations concerning general behaviour, feeding and roosting habits, song and call-notes, rearing of the brood, occasional bigamy and not forgetting polygamy to which we are told some wrens show a strong tendency, are described by Mr. Armstrong in his engaging style with that sympathetic understanding of bird-behaviour that will appeal to a wide circle of readers. The more serious student of bird-life cannot but be impressed by the valuable amount of information obtained by direct observation at home and abroad, and from a wide range of literature, which, together with illustrations from photographs and numerous drawings and diagrams form an important contribution to ornithological literature.

G. R. HUMPHREYS.

THE HOUSE OF BLACKWOOD, 1804-1954. By F. D. Tredrey. William Blackwood and Sons, Ltd. 25s.

A volume such as this, produced to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the publishing house of Blackwood's, seems likely to interest two main sections of the public,—the general reader thrilling to the romantic appeal of a family saga, and the literary historian eager to find in the relations between author and editor more about the many distinguished writers who have contributed to Blackwood's. There is much in the story of Blackwood's to fascinate the layman. William Blackwood I's patient rise to the top of his profession, his dealings with Walter Scott, his great duel with the rival Edinburgh publishing firm of Constable. There is real drama, too, in the early days of *Blackwood's Magazine*, and the literary buccaneering of Lockhart, Wilson, and Maginn which launched "Maga" on its course. Under this potent excitement, Mrs. Oliphant and Mrs. Porter produced the first history of the firm some 58 years ago, but their *Annals of a Publishing House* was woefully partisan. Glamourising Blackwood and all his works, dismissing his opponents as blockheads or villains, it made a good story, but as history, it left much to be desired.



If anything the present volume veers to the other extreme, and tends to become a series of names and dates, extracts and sources. Some of Mrs. Oliphant's exuberances are corrected, Maginn for one securing kindlier treatment, but the predominant tone of this new book is subdued. There are decorously written paragraphs on prominent authors associated with the firm, and revealing glimpses of the family's domestic history. As a narrative, this book lags behind Mrs. Oliphant's; as a work of reference, it contains much valuable information about the more recent activities of the firm but tells little new of the early days. At times the scholarship is suspect as when, on page 36, the Minerva reading-rooms, Cork, are suddenly and mysteriously transplanted to Dublin. The book is pleasantly produced and well illustrated; it contains a useful bibliography, an annotated version of the Chaldee MS. and an interesting note on the authorship of the "Canadian Boat Song" which first appeared in "Maga" in 1829. It falls, however, between two stools; it is too sober for a story, and it is disappointing as literary history.

A HORSEMAN THROUGH SIX REIGNS. *Reminiscences of a Royal Riding Master.*  
By Horace Smith. London: Odhams Press Limited. 15s. net.

It is difficult to believe that Horace Smith is 76 years old, for ebullient youth emanates from every page of his book. He has had a great life and has been pre-eminent at coaching, driving, judging in the show ring, teaching riding, hunting and dealing in horses; of all these, driving is still his chief love. Do clothes make the man? This question arises when we compare the clothes of those who drove their four-in-hands or sat in their broughams with those who now drive in their motor cars; we can truthfully say that the clothes of those days seemed to make men appear better than the men of to-day. The slackness of the dress of the modern professional man compares unfavourably with the dignity of the frock coat and the morning coat in the time of the horse. The author has won prizes everywhere; he has bought and sold over 12,000 horses in his lifetime. He has taught many famous people to ride and the excellent performances of Queen Elizabeth are tribute to his prowess as a teacher. Good dining out horse stories pervade the book. Combined with the fun he has had, he has made a financial success of a firm dealing with horses, which started with two animals and in a few years there were 650; and the firm began as a milk business. He has bought and judged at the Dublin Show, and he is of the opinion there is no place to equal Ireland as a breeding ground for light horses. There is no better health giving exercise than riding and part of Smith's peroration reads:

"I am constantly reminded of the never ending pleasure that I have derived from our longfaced friend the horse. I have many things to thank him for, my longevity, whatever worldly wisdom I possess; many amusing and instructive hours; and a full and interesting life."

The illustrations which demonstrate most varieties of driving and riding are excellent and there is a comprehensive Index.

An intriguing book for the horse lover.

B.S.



**RACING REFLECTIONS.** By John Hislop with drawings by John Skeaping. London : Hutchinson. 18s. net.

This is really a compendium of articles which have appeared in the *Observer*, and although there is an absence of cohesion, each one taken separately will make good bed-time reading. The author has a profound knowledge of horses and is probably the best-known racing journalist to-day, but apart from these advantages he is a skilled horseman, having ridden in two Grand Nationals, and having secured third place in one. Most aspects of racing are dealt with in what might be called telegraphic essays and the personalities of well-known race owners and horses are capably drawn. The question of eligibility for the stud book is discussed. How many people know of the existence of Miss Prior's H-B Stud book? It should be possible for this work to become an official publication under such title as "The English Half-bred Stud Book". The situation at the moment is, to say the least, deceptive; for example the great My Babu is not eligible for inclusion. In fact the Stud book historically is inaccurate and "produces no record of the breeding of many of our best race horses and their descendants". It is of interest to find that in America it is more profitable to keep a good race horse in training than to retire him to stud; in England the reverse holds. Taxation of racing in England is appalling; the cost for the racegoer there is far more than in Ireland; some relief has been given lately but more is required. It has been said with authority that 75 per cent. of the highly priced yearlings never win a race and although a good horse is sometimes the product of two indifferent racehorses and often of a good one and a bad one, the best horses tend to be bred from parents who have shown merit on the racecourse.

John Skeaping, A.R.A., has contributed six brilliant drawings, but their value would be enhanced by legends.

We can recommend this treatise to the breeder, the trainer and the racegoer. B. S.

**STARTER'S ORDERS.** By Elizabeth Eliot. London : Cassell & Co. 10s. 6d. net.

This is another book about the Turf, but it is very different from that of Hislop, for it is a novel based somewhat in the style of Nat Gould. The ways of trainers, bookies and tipsters are all here. Some exciting races are described. An enquiry by the Stewards into a case of doping instigated by a bookmaker is dramatic.

Interspersed between all of these is a love affair between a trainer and a horsey young widow.

The railway bookstall will be the place to buy "Starter's Orders".

B. S.

**COLD WAR IN HELL.** By Harry Blamires. Longmans. 10s. 6d.

To turn from Dante's *Inferno* or medieval paintings to accounts of Belsen and Dachau or the ingenuities of totalitarianism is to realize that our century has given to hell another dimension; and with Kafka, Sartre and Malraux as our guides we have learnt that the tormentors and the furnishings of the lower regions are horrifying not because they are grotesque but because they so meticulously copy the pattern of twentieth-century existence.

Mr. Blamires, having one day become a little exasperated with the old-fashioned views of his guardian angel, was flattered to find his criticisms supported by a persuasive stranger ; but the result of this encounter was a forced visit to Hell. The place was efficiently run : smooth transport facilities, briskly-organized hotels and schools, political meetings and interviews of a recognizable type, and everywhere a smooth logic, and a monotonous regime that was the perfection of officialdom. His adventures and escape are realistically described, but Mr. Blamires is not concerned in his story with physical horrors. His purpose is to disclose what lies behind the insidious arguments and plausible attitudes that are so familiar to-day. *Cold War in Hell* is a witty and very intelligent book that will entertain, and also disquiet, its readers.

**NAPOLEON BANISHED.** The Journeys to Elba and to St. Helena recorded in the Letters and Journal of two British naval officers : Captain Thomas Ussher and Lieutenant Nelson Mills.

**A DOOR MUST BE EITHER OPEN OR SHUT.** A Proverb by Alfred de Musset. Illustrated by Alistair Grant. Miniature Books. The Rodale Press. 5s. each.

In June 1814, Captain Ussher, who commanded the ship bringing Napoleon to Elba, wrote for a Mrs. M. an account of the voyage, the bearing and conversation of his prisoner. Mrs. M.'s cousin, Lieutenant Mills, further satisfied her curiosity by giving in letters and a journal his impressions of the journey to, and first days at, St. Helena. Both writers watched Napoleon with attentive respect, and their records are vivid and detailed.

Alfred de Musset's little comedy, in which a Count proposes marriage to a Marquise, is almost Wildean in situation and dialogue. The deft translation conveys also the wry hint of autobiographical experience. Both books are worthy additions to the discriminating Miniature series.

**NIGHT RIDER.** By Robert Penn Warren. Eyre & Spottiswoode. 13s. 6d.

**PICTURES FROM AN INSTITUTION.** By Randall Jarrell. Faber. 12s. 6d.

**THE PONDER HEART.** By Eudora Welty. Hamish Hamilton. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Robert Penn Warren is very well known in America as a novelist, critic and poet. This edition of *Night Rider* is a reissue of his first novel which was originally published in 1940 and has since been followed by such important works as *All the King's Men* and *World Enough and Time*. Taken by itself *Night Riders* is not a particularly interesting piece of work. The central figure, who is a lawyer in a small southern town, finds himself swept up half-unwillingly in the activities of The Tobacco Growers' Association which sets out to force the organised buyers to give a reasonable price for the crops. Power corrupts on both sides and the result is cinematic violence, murder and torchlight processions. The central figure shows a surprising capacity for murky introspection and as he wanders through this history the reader may feel a little neglected. But at any rate it all has to do with Pride and with Evil, and to many the technique will suggest Faulkner.

Like Mr. Penn Warren, Mr. Jarrell is a professor, and is a poet, critic and novelist, in that order. *Pictures from an Institution* is his first novel and is subtitled *A Comedy*. The Institution is a small American women's college of the

progressive and expensive sort and the Pictures are character sketches of the faculty. Mr. Jarrell feels that a plot would not have been appropriate (presumably there is some arrangement of "themes") and it may only be an accident that the wonderful novelist Gertrude comes to be the dominant and unifying figure. Other characters, Herr Rosenbaum the composer, and Miss Batterson the English instructor, probably interest the author more than his readers, but at his best Mr. Jarrell is very amusing indeed. The athletic President, his South African wife and Afghan dogs are very good, and one would like to know more about the unseen Manny Gumbiner who came and went in an unspeakable blaze of splendour.

Miss Eudora Welty is often a very impressive writer. Her short stories are in many cases superbly successful, and where they are not they are usually intriguing. *The Ponder Heart* is a prolonged short story which was spread over a number of instalments in *The New Yorker*. Briefly, it tells of the adventures of the village idiot in Clay, a very small southern town. Uncle Daniel Ponder is generous to a fault and this serves the first section of the book. In the second we are concerned with his marriage to a local country girl who is none too bright herself, and in the third Uncle Daniel is the accused in a spectacular murder trial. The story is told by a breathless and rather tiresome narrator and one gets the impression at last that this is dilute Erskine Caldwell, guaranteed harmless and bordering on the precious. Like so many of her compatriots Miss Welty is a very competent writer; though at her best she is more than good, in *The Ponder Heart* she is for once merely indifferent.

THE PACE THAT KILLS. By Kevin O'Hara. Hurst and Blackett. 9s. 6d.

A new writer of the Private Eye school, Mr. Kevin O'Hara has quickly established himself as a master of the tough and witty thriller. His hero, Chico Brett, encounters smugglers, arson and murder in this volume and ties all up neatly in an adventure of intelligence, vigour and credible luck. Chico Brett is a likeable young detective and Kevin O'Hara an agreeable and practised writer. One is happy to say that the story is first rate and that it succeeds in its purpose of thrilling by its considerable literary merit rather than by what is today the more usual mixture of sadism and adolescent eroticism.

THE LEGEND OF THE ROOD. With *The Three Maries* and *The Death of Pilate*.

From the Cornish Miracle Plays. Done into English verse with an Introduction by F. E. Halliday. Gerald Duckworth. 8s. 6d.

The Cornish miracle plays with their invaluable details for the student of the early Elizabethan stage, are also "the only ones that treat of the most beautiful of all Christian fables, the legend of the Holy Rood and the Oil of Mercy". Mr. Halliday, in a graceful tribute to Mr. R. Morton Nance, "greatest of all Cornish scholars", stresses his indebtedness to the unpublished literal translations and authoritative labours that were placed at his disposal. These versions of *The Legend of the Rood*, *The Three Maries* and *The Death of Pilate* are most skilful, with all the colour and animation that must belong to the originals but looser in metrical design.

The introduction gives a vivid account of the medieval Cornish literature and stage, and of the quaint devices, buffonery and beauty of the plays that instructed eager, festive crowds.



THE SONS OF USNECH. Translated by Thomas Kinsella from the earliest Gaelic Sources. With nine designs by Mia Cranwill. Bound quarter leather, patterned boards and slip case, price 2 gns. Quarter parchment, similar boards, price 15s. The Dolmen Press.

THE DOLMEN CHAPBOOK. An Illustrated Miscellany in parts. Nos. 1 and 2. Single parts 2s. 6d. The Dolmen Press.

The translation of *The Sons of Usnech* from the Irish text in the Book of Leinster deviates but slightly from a literal version. Its designs, type and binding make it a handsome volume. The two parts of *The Dolmen Chapbook* are, 'The Ballad of Jane Shore' by Donagh MacDonagh with a design by Eric Patton, and a traditional Wexford Carol with music, and a design by Leslie MacWeeney.

Both productions are characteristic of the distinctive work of The Dolmen Press.

BETTER ENGLISH. By G. H. Vallins. Andre Deutsch. 15s.

In a new volume of The Language Library, Mr. Vallins continues the agreeable discussion of written English that he began in *Good English*. Whether this will lead us on to *Best English* or no, *Better* is surely an excellent book. The chapter headings are rather more sprightly than the discussion, but when we read of "a participle phrase turned adverb by reason of an introductory adverbial conjunction," we quickly find that all becomes clear in the many examples Mr. Vallins rushes to our aid.

TIME REMEMBERED. By Jean Anouilh. English Version by Patricia Moyes. Methuen & Co. 7s. 6d.

ARISTOPHANES' *LYSISTRATA*. Translated by Dudley Fitts. Faber & Faber. 12s. 6d.

There may be some point in translating Anouilh's *Léocadia* into *Time Remembered*. It suggests the title of Proust's novel and it was, perhaps, therefore, hoped to attract the attention of a generation familiar with this novelist's work. However, the title does give an idea of the play's preoccupation with the hero's obsession with the past, although, at the same time it puts it in line with Priestley's rather different essays on dramatic tinkering with relativity in the time factor. Be that as it may, it is good to have an additional version of another of Anouilh's comedies. It is remarkable how this dramatist appeals to English audiences. He is even more popular in these islands than in his own country. It may be that his *Pièces Roses*, of which *Time Remembered* is one, serve as an antidote to the universal pessimism with their gay fantasy. Patricia Moyes has made an adequate version of the original.

Another translation which has a different kind of gaiety is that of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* by Dudley Fitts. It is interesting to recall another version by Laurence Housman in 1911 which was published by the Woman's Press as a suffragist tract. The subject of the play is, of course, the revolt of women against their husband's persistence in making war. To bring them back to peaceful domestic life they refuse to live with their men until they lay down their arms and come to terms with their enemies. This assertion of female independence naturally appealed to the suffragettes. In Housman's text there is little of the bawdy element which is more marked in the present version. The translator, however, makes the point that indecency is relative and that in Aristophanes,



as in Rabelais, Chaucer and Shakespeare, we have no leer but healthy fun. There is, indeed, rough laughter in Aristophanes and Mr. Fitts has succeeded in approximating to the original through contemporary idiom: This is no *tabulum* for the squeamish but rich meat for the mature. A. J. L.

THE RISING GENERATION. Special Issue for 1954. Tokyo, Kenkyusha, 7s. 6d.

This English language publication appears bi-monthly and is devoted to scholarly studies in English literature. The present issue contains essays on Yeats, Woolf, Hazlitt and Defoe, as well as English translations of Gray's "*De Principiis Cogitandi*" (complete) and of Haiku and Tanka poems. There are also articles on Japanese literature in English, and on English and American literature in contemporary Japan.

NEW WORLD WRITING, Numbers 5, 6 and 7. New York: New American Library. 50 cents each.

New World Writing, a semi-annual publication, is probably the most ambitious and successful recent version of the "little magazine". The volumes are issued in the jarring American paper-back style and each contains about three hundred pages of stories, verse and criticism. The literary level is generally high and all but the most die-hard contributors have written clearly and well. The circulation is enormous (which explains the readability) and since the venture moreover seems to have prospered, a good deal of the most important contemporary writing appears in these pages. No. 5 contains an extract from Samuel Beckett's *Molloy*, and an essay on Beckett by Niall Montgomery; No. 6 includes Donagh MacDonagh's *Happy as Larry*; while No. 7 features some letters from Dylan Thomas to Oscar Williams.

A FRAGMENT OF BEAUTY. By Joan Medhurst. London: Hurst and Blackett. 12s. 6d. net.

Because of bomb attacks, the perils of war have become so intensified that severe bodily and facial distortions have necessitated advance in surgical measures for their amelioration. Plastic surgery has come into its own and results are getting better every day. We have seen the films demonstrating the work of Gillies and he has certainly provided new faces for old: his successors have improved on some of his wonderful techniques.

Mrs. Medhurst in her first novel has drawn a sensitive and moving picture of a child, Julie, whose face was much disfigured in an air raid. Julie is illegitimate and has had a hard upbringing but this has not interfered with a delightful personality; there is no chance of her being noble *because* she is disfigured. She stands up to a certain amount of mockery in school but is lucky enough to be befriended by several people including the young almoner of the hospital who adopts her. Will this adoption interfere with the love affairs of Anna the almoner? There are interesting sketches of life in a hospital devoted to plastic surgery. We liked the description of nurses drinking "stewed red tea". Some aspects of school life are well portrayed. The difficulty of making distorted children feel like others is specially stressed.

Although this book is about an unpleasant subject, it has so much sincerity that its reading leaves us with mental and spiritual satisfaction. B. S.

THE RED PETTICOAT AND OTHER STORIES. By Bryan MacMahon. MacMillan. 12s. 6d.

Mr. MacMahon's new book contains nineteen stories of life and love in rural Ireland. The stories are exceedingly pleasant to read; though Mr. MacMahon does not aspire to great heights his literary touch is sure and he very seldom fails. Occasionally the stories struggle a little towards the lyrical or drift towards the profound, but for the most part the author is less ambitious and more successful. That Mr. MacMahon has a real though delicate genius is amply shown in this volume; one's interest in his work is reawakened by these delightful stories.

THE SPEAR. By Louis de Wohl. Gollancz. 15s.

*The Spear* takes several rather obvious clues from *The Robe* and is another competent historical novel. The scene opens, of course, in Decadent Rome, then shifts to Jerusalem where the hero, a Roman officer, has been posted. Mr. de Wohl presents the complex political-military situation well, and cleverly exploits our knowledge of the impending crucifixion. The Spear is the spear with which the Roman pierces the body of Christ, and though the ultimate effect of this act upon the Roman is cinematically orthodox the novel on its own merits does not rise to a very high level. Mr. de Wohl's style is flexible and efficient, ranging from modest rhetoric to a cautious *monologue interieur*, but it never ventures very far from its journalistic mean. The whole of this quick-moving (but very long) scenario is of course haunted by the great rhythms and images of The Authorised Version, and the author is inclined merely to imply the greatness of his subject by rather banal understatement. Very likely he is wise to do so, but the effect is rather flat unless the reader does all the work.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: 1763-1783. By Eric Robson. The Batchworth Press. 18s.

When Eric Robson died a year ago he left an unfinished study of constitutional and military aspects of the American Revolution. This was to have been his life work and though it was admirably begun it was of course not completed. Sir Lewis Namier and Mr. T. H. McGuffie have brought together the finished parts but have so respectfully refrained from editing that there is some rather tiresome repetition and great gaps that a few notes might have filled. The book is not for the most 'general' of readers but is an excellent special study of the subject. Mr. Robson has exploited manuscript resources at Ann Arbor, Nottingham, Windsor, the B.M., the Historical Manuscripts Commission, and the Colonial Office, and has organised a vast amount of material into a most cogent order.

THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE INFORMER. By Edward Hyams. London: Longmans, Green and Co. 12s. 6d. net.

"The Slaughterhouse Informer" is the name of a provincial newspaper which, from small beginnings, obtains a circulation of millions, chiefly from a competition for a bride. It is used, too, for conveying information by means of code to Foreign Powers. The character sketches of the chief spy, of the village girl who becomes the fourth wife of an emir, of the farmer and his wife are all delightfully drawn and the dialogue is worthy of close study. Mrs. Figg the mother

of the beauty had fourteen children because what she liked best in the world was babies and she had to keep having new ones. Cows adored Figg and gave 100 gallons more milk than to anyone else when he was handling them. Sick animals recovered at a touch of his hand and the ewes in his care bore twins. The school where the Figgs attended was half derelict, draughty and damp and wholly unhealthy, but next door was a brand new air conditioned, hygienically lighted factory for making poison gas. We must quote the definitions of a person, a gentleman and a man. "A person is someone who has been at Oxford or Cambridge University; if he is courteous and does not seem to recognise the housekeeper's existence he is a gentleman. A man is someone who comes about the smell on the landing" . . . There is a wonderful story about a coloured airman who becomes an emir; in fact the book is full of the most entertaining quips and wisecracks; in addition it has an intriguing plot.

Hamlet says "Is not this something more than fantasy?" Hyam's present fantasy will take one away from the worries of the world.

B. S.

**SMOKY.** Sledge dog of Alaska. By Jack Landru. Max Parrish. 8s. 6d.

For children who enjoy animal stories but have lost their taste for the whimsical, *Smoky* can be recommended. It is an account of sledge dogs, and the racing of them in teams, in the Arctic North, and, as the tale of a school-boy and his mongrel companion, is full of adventure. Delightful in its sympathy, and with the fascination of the Alaskan background and vocabulary, it will enthrall the young reader.

**BEAUTY AND PROGRESS.** By Shahid Pravin. Hindusthan Library, Calcutta. One Rupee, four annas.

The publishers claim that this book "is meant for no ordinary reader. It is dangerous knowledge. As a philosophical discovery it shall rank as one of the highest and that is its recommendation. From behind the scenes Shahid Pravin has influenced the trend of political opinion and sociological reasoning more than any one else now living." The author himself adds: "It shall change the course of human destiny more profoundly than any other doctrine so far enunciated." What follows is a declaration that beauty must be our guide on the evolutionary path and in the attainment of cosmic consciousness; and a denunciation of conventional morality that deprives us of the fullest emotional development and satisfaction of the senses. As a mixture of esoteric teachings, scraps of Western science and philosophy, and more than a suggestion of aesthetic decadence, this little compilation, written in uncertain English and badly produced, is trivial rather than original.

**DE DESCRIPTIONE TEMPORUM.** An Inaugural Lecture by C. S. Lewis. Cambridge University Press. 2s. 6d.

*De Descriptione Temporum* is the inaugural lecture delivered in November 1954 by Professor C. S. Lewis from the newly founded Chair of Medieval and Renaissance English Literature in the University of Cambridge.

Believing that the barrier between the Medieval and Renaissance ages "has been greatly exaggerated, if indeed it was not largely a figment of Humanist



propaganda", Professor Lewis considers the rival claims of historians for certain other neat divisions. Then brilliantly, wittily, and with a nostalgic preference for 'Old Western literature' and ways, he sketches the changes in politics, in the arts, in religion and industry which support his own argument that "the greatest of all divisions in the history of the West (is) that which divides the present from, say, the age of Jane Austen and Scott."

THE MUTUAL FLAME. On Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. By G. Wilson Knight. Methuen. 18s.

The beauty and ambiguities of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, and all that they communicate of torment and radiance, have an autobiographical significance elusive enough to tempt every reader to his own interpretation. There are, as Mr. Wilson Knight notes, the academic enquirers who prefer the mundane facts of patronage and advancement and the creative writers enthralled by their art and erotics; but the lovely or bitter words also echo Prospero's

And my ending is despair,  
Unless I be relieved by prayer;  
Which pierces so, that it assaults  
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.

Experience, knowing both flesh and spirit, makes its renunciation and transcends itself.

It is with these deeper allusions that Mr. Knight is mainly concerned for he believes that the first form of the *Sonnets*, the immediate response to youthful contacts, was revised or rewritten as the Dark Lady and the Fair Youth became for Shakespeare more than the malign and lyrical aspects of love. Rather, as the Apollonian and Dionysian elements in life were more clearly revealed to him, they were to symbolize the ideas that were the core of his plays.

"Whatever we think of the story, in so far as there is one, there flowers from its soil some of the world's greatest love-poetry. From this nettle-bed of vice, we pluck the flower, genius. Nor is the poetry itself anything but healthy; throughout there breathes an air of simplicity, honesty and purity, shirking nothing and somehow finally establishing a spiritual principle of the kind which we naturally associate with the noblest literature."

This spiritual principle, it is suggested, appears in the *Sonnets* as "a semi-dramatic expression of a clearly defined process of integration pointing towards the realisation of a high state of being; a process rather like that announced by Wordsworth in his *Recluse* fragment, printed in the Preface to *The Excursion* . . . The creative consciousness is bisexual; otherwise there could be no creation; and in representing the poet's engagements with both sexes, the *Sonnets* describe steps on the path towards the creative integration." Mr. Knight quotes from Lao-Tze: "He who, being a man, remains a woman, will become a universal channel"; and his analysis of the *Sonnets* and *The Phoenix and the Turtle* shows how much this bi-sexuality enriches the imagination. The argument is, however, a little strained on occasion, perhaps because of a too determined attempt to discover in "the balanced antithesis within Shakespeare's *Sonnets* . . . an expression of those two root principles of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, the Dionysian and the Apollonian." At times this "intertwining of good and evil" looks less like



spiritual integration than the accommodation the common man finds for his sins and virtues.

Mr. Knight is not indifferent to the usual academic problems ; but he prefers—and uses brilliantly—the ‘spatial’ approach to the ‘temporal’. “This comes from a recognition that poetic composition is made from various stabs of insight, each existent, like the Fair Youth himself, in its own right : we see, or feel, them ‘crowning the present’, however we may be doubting ‘of the rest’ ; that is, in our transposition, doubting the final validity of the logical links.”

Whether one accepts his interpretation in its entirety or not, *The Mutual Flame* is a remarkable and illuminating study of a continuous creative process “defined and crystallised in the Sonnets”.

### PERIODICALS

THE BRITISH JOURNAL FOR THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE. Vol. V. No. 20. February, 1955. Nelson. 7s. 6d.

The valuable contributions to the February issue of the Journal include papers by Harold Jeffreys on ‘The Present Position in Probability Theory’ and by J. C. C. McKinsey and Patrick Suppes on ‘Invariance in Classical Mechanics’. This study, the editors note with regret, is the last piece of work Professor McKinsey was engaged upon before his death. The second part of A. G. Pikler’s ‘Utility Theories in Field Physics and Mathematical Economics’ and Virginia Black’s examination of the rival claims of laboratory and field research in Psychology and related sciences will also be of great interest to specialists. There are, in addition, several distinguished book reviews.

ÉTUDES ANGLAISES. VIII<sup>e</sup> année. No. 1. Janvier—Mars 1955. Didier, Paris. 400 fr.

This issue of the eclectic *Études Anglaises* ranges from an essay on plays of Kyd and Ford by F. Carrère ; articles on Byron by A. Parreaux and Edmund Blunden ; passages from Edmund Burke’s ‘Note Book’ selected by P. Baratier, to a critical survey of W. B. Yeats’ letters by M. L. Cazamian. The articles and the many reviews, written in French and English, form an outstanding number.

BOOKS ABROAD. An International Literary Quarterly. Winter 1955. University of Oklahoma Press. One Dollar and Twenty-five Cents.

The particular interest of the Winter number of *Books Abroad* is the consideration it gives to modern Arabic literature. The essays on Vietnamese, Philippine, Indonesian and Korean Letters are detailed and perceptive, and expertly survey the achievements and difficulties of contemporary writers in these countries.

MODERN FICTION STUDIES. A Critical Quarterly published by The Modern Fiction Club of Purdue University, Indiana. Vol. 1. No. 1. February 1955.

The opening number of *Modern Fiction Studies* is devoted to Conrad. The critical essays by Professor Walter F. Wright and others on various aspects of his work, and the selected Bibliography, are highly competent and thorough. Presumably designed for university students, they will also be appreciated by the general reader.

TRACE. No. 10. February, 1955. Edited by James Boyer May. Villiers Publications, London. 1s.

*Trace* contains, besides its useful directory of the little magazines, extracts from their editorials, and a reminder of the value of the smaller periodicals to the young writer.

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